



# INDIA'S DESTINY

*By*

SRI R. NARASIMHA REDDY

*Foreword by*

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## FOREWORD

Shri R. Narasimha Reddy, the author of the book, is a young man from Andhra. *India's Destiny* is his first publication. Narasimha Reddy was a prominent worker of the Communist party. Slowly, however, the finer instincts of this idealistic young man asserted themselves, and eventually he revolted against the gross practices of communism, at home and abroad. Along with other kindred spirits he left the Communist party.

*India's Destiny* is a record of the process of rethinking through which Narasimha Reddy passed during his period of growing disenchantment with communism. It is a remarkable record, and a most encouraging sign for India's future. That a young man, brought up on the usual stale-fare dished out in our dead Universities, and drawn like so many of our youth by the delusive promise of life held out by communism, should trek back across the desolate fields of communist politics and by his own independent thinking reach the refreshing conclusions that have been presented in this book, does surely inspire confidence in India's rising generation and indeed in India's future. In the midst of so much superficial and imitative thinking that marks our generation, it is pleasantly surprising to find younger people trying to go so deep into the problems of National reconstruction.



resulting in the entire nation being caught in this vicious circle of needs and satisfaction, to the total break up of the personality of the nation. The nation's mind must undoubtedly serve the (cause of) production of material means ; but it should not become the servitor and the slave of material life. Providing (for) science, technology and organisation is only one phase of the mind's role, the more important being (that of) the torch-bearer and the revealer of the meaning and purpose of existence, which alone gives direction and control to the body-life". These are wise words that the architects of new India would do well to bear in mind.

Keeping in view this principle of the wholeness of life, and the need of a proper blending of its material, mental, and moral bases, the author discusses the economic, political, educational and cultural problems of national reconstruction. Parts of this discussion are most interesting and refreshing. Personally I found the political section very interesting. M. N. Roy has done more in this country than anyone else to lay bare the faults of the party-system. But Narasimha Reddy too has done a good job of it. And his suggestions both for the improvement of the parliamentary system in being and the development of a partyless democracy, are worthy of serious consideration. We in the Sarvodaya movement have of course been advocating these very ideas, but it is refreshing to receive support from a person of Sri Reddy's background.

Perhaps a fault of the book is that the author has tried to cover too wide a ground on account of which it has become too sketchy in parts. I do hope that the young author will in later works deal more fully with some of the problems he has touched upon so briefly here.

In the last chapter which deals with the moral basis of national life, the author comes to *Bhoodan* and discovers in it that fusion of the moral and material values of life, which he sets up as an ideal.

"Nature" he says "has its own inscrutable design to fulfil her purpose. She has thrown up a sublime revolt in the form of Vinoba, by releasing a tremendous moral force to counter the degeneration of man, in the shape of the great Bhoodan movement. Land is a mere symbol of the moral core of the movement, which is not one of mere collection and distribution of land. It is one of gathering together the hearts of the entire people. . . . Ownership and possession of property or wealth, of power or position, . . . is the root cause of all the problems of disharmony and conflict in the world . . . Bhoodan therefore demands a change in our thinking and feeling, here and now . . . It has within its womb the concept of *Gandhi* and *Ramaji*, which ultimately should mean No Raj. It conceives of a non-party, decentralised, democratic system of collective existence. It aims to reinvigorate the true human values of life by eradicating

the power of money which has become the sole value in modern life. . . . . The uniqueness of Bhoodan is the fusion of the moral with the material aspect of life . . . . The one little corner of the Universe that a man can change is himself, and Bhoodan asks man to change himself first, before exhorting others to change. . . . . Bhoodan therefore means the liberation of the individual self."

These words show a very keen understanding. They also indicate the long and difficult journey that the author has made from violent class-war to the moral reconstruction of society. Anyone who has made this pilgrimage deserves to be listened to by his fellowmen.

Joshi Math (Garhwal)  
5th October 1956.

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN





INDIA'S DESTINY IN THE  
ATOMIC AGE

INDIA is just eight years in freedom. After long ages of dark servility it had a rebirth, in the dawn of liberation. With the tragic legacy of the past, of poverty, ignorance, disunity and social and economic backwardness, India had to enter the world arena in a tremendously revolutionary era for the human race. Faced with the big problem of solving the most elementary but basic needs of man, food, work and shelter, India is fortunate in having the rich development of science and technology and the experience of various sister nations, along with the unparalleled heritage of its ancient Vedic Culture and experience. India, therefore, has a great role to play in the world human experiment and its destiny, in the atomic age, shall be of no little significance to the affairs of the world.

Materially underdeveloped, due to historical circumstance, India no doubt lags behind many of the advanced nations; but it has an advantage, that they had not in the beginnings of their march, the advantage of their rich experience, which saves India from the pitfalls, they had in their journey. Seizing the cream of others' experience, if India can set its roots firm and deep in the soil

of its ancient heritage of Vedic Culture, and creatively seek out its new path of construction, it shall fulfil the destiny, history has placed on its slender shoulders. Like a growing plant, that dives its roots into the bosom depths of the earth, and throws up rich foliage towards the Sun, absorbing life-essence from both, India must sink its roots in the ancient culture and turn its foliage towards the glorious future, in carving out the creative present. Blind revival of the ancient past, however great and noble it be, even if it is possible, will be useless and futile, and unsuited to the time spirit of the present age, shall distort our national personality and defeat our destined purpose. Likewise, cheap imitation of other nations, without grasping a lesson of experience, will also end in miserable failure, as no nation can be repeated in another without injuring and distorting its inherent spirit. What India needs is creative thought, creative plan and creative action, taking the good of the past and the present, of ourselves and of others and synthesising them in the light of clear and definite aims and ideals, into something new, dynamic and living.

The problem of the world is the problem of the nation and the problem of the nation is the problem of the individual, all three being interconnected by the evolutionary human purpose. The long process of the evolution of human species has set upon mankind the great task of consciously developing the human being, in the individual and in the collective, in body, mind and soul, in a harmonious integration of all aspects

of human nature, towards the fully self-conscious, self-motivated, integrated personality, which realizes its rights and duties as a social being and as an individual, living and working harmoniously without the need of force, of law, of code or any extraneous compulsion. This is the great human purpose, the goal of humanity. With this great ideal in dim and distant view, recent humanity has so far marched on in semi-conscious appreciation and incidental groping experiment.

With the dawn of the atomic age, humanity is becoming more and more conscious of this evolutionary purpose. Man's discovery of the atomic energy has given the much needed terrific shock to the erstwhile canalised, conditioned and rigid thinking. Wars, which were as essential to Governments as taxes, have now to be obliterated from the life of nations and all conflicts, economic political and racial, that necessarily lead to war, have to be peacefully solved and the basic cause of human conflict, the economic and social injustice of man exploiting man, has to be absolved without delay, if the human species, with all its worth and work, of industry, civilisation and culture, is not to be destroyed in an unprecedented atomic catastrophe. The atomic age demands first and foremost, change in human thinking, in our values of life and in our attitude and approach to social existence.

We are to-day standing at an immensely crucial epoch in the history of the world; total annihilation, if we fail to heed the voice of time and change our social system, or immensely

glorious possibilities of development, if we can stand the challenge of the atom. Atomic energy heralds an immense revolution in the science of technology and production of material wealth and therefore, simultaneously, demands an equal revolution in the subjective nature of man. By wise and proper use of this secret of nature, that man has discovered, the productive potentialities of the human race increase tremendously, making the task of providing the material basis of existence far too easy. But it needs a genuine change and growth of the mental, moral and spiritual nature of the race, to prevent the dangerous abuse of this most powerful energy. All the various chunks of humanity, that are classed in several nations and nationalities, must feel as one great human family, reflected in different hues in different climes. They are only different parts of one integral whole, unified by the basic human essence. Without this realisation, the materially developed nations are bound to misuse this great force, in the same way they did other powers of nature in the past, for self-aggrandisement, through domination and exploitation of weaker nations, resulting in national conflicts, which must inevitably lead to a devastating atomic war. If humanity has to survive, nations must learn to live in peace, brotherhood and rich co-operation. It means no mere negative attitude of living in one's own shell, but a positive and dynamically co-operative approach to one another, born of a deep realisation of the ultimate purpose of the human race.

India, through non-violence and militancy of herle

consequence in the world's arena of power-politics, has to-day wrought a unique position between the antagonistic power blocs, through her moral and spiritual force, by voicing the call of the time spirit. India's presence has begun to be felt all over the world. Its contribution in attempting to get international disputes settled by peaceful methods, have been meritorious; but, secure and lasting peace is yet to come and India will be called upon to shoulder still onerous responsibility. Placed in this situation in the world scene, India has started to re-build its economy and resuscitate its people in tune with the present age. For the first time in its history, it has sought the gigantic path of national planning in all aspects of life. Here, in this building of its own national existence in tune with time, lies the acid test of India's spirit; for, only when India practises what it preaches, it can fulfil its historical role in the world.

For a materially backward country, the most primary task is undoubtedly to build her economy, her productive capacity of the material means of life. Only by vastly increasing its national wealth and distributing it on the basis of human justice and equality, can it solve the age-old problems of hunger, starvation and famine, with the attendant social evils of ignorance, corruption, disease and deterioration. To utilise its full resources in a wise and proper way, it needs a considerable development of the nation's mental calibre, in science and technology, in organisation and discipline.

In this primary but most necessary task, India can have the experience, knowledge and assistance of the materially developed nations. But the sense of purposive direction, which alone can maintain the harmony and the balance of life, through the various stages of development, must be sought from its ancient cultural heritage, interpreted and adopted in tune to the atomic age. If it merely repeats, what America or Russia did in their plans to build their material wealth, it is bound to fall into the same tragic errors, whose pathos of ill-balance, still dogs those nations. Conditioned by the situation and circumstances of a particular age and in half-conscious realisation, those nations solely and entirely concentrated on the mere material aspect of their national development, training and commanding the national mind towards the same purpose, in total neglect of an equally balancing cultural development of the nation. Russia, suddenly thrown on the road of freedom, manned by enthusiastic men, and propelled by the force of circumstances, laboured as one sternly-mastered battalion, to build up its material and military power by a rapid develop-

has also broken the balance of life, by concentrating on one aspect of the human personality at the total neglect of the other, and has come to feed millions of the unemployed into becoming idlers, while the top section, who get all for no labour, wallow in dissipated, sensational, sentimental existence, with the entire fabric of the nations personality corroded with confusing fears, anxieties, and worries, making the most wealthy nation the most unhappy.

If India is not to repeat the story of these nations, it has to grasp the lesson of history and consciously aim and plan to build an integrated and balanced life. It must seize the inherent spirit of the Vedic Culture, which in the circumstances of that far off age, built a stable society on a harmonious equilibrium of the basic aspects of life. An integrated personality of the individual or nation, necessarily means a healthy body, a sound mind and a serene soul, in proper proportion and perfect combination. Even if one of these is either negated or neglected or is given undue importance, the balance gets disturbed and the personality suffers in friction and conflict, leading ultimately to disorder and deterioration. Body, the physical basis of life, to be good and healthy, in order to sustain and enrich both mind and soul, needs all the necessary material means of existence, whose creation is, therefore, the primary task of a nation. But, the material means should be set a limit, in their nature and extent, by the needs of the mind and the soul, in the light of a balanced personality. Otherwise, this aspect of a



nation gets undue importance and the energy of the whole nation will be diverted into production of means of satisfaction of material needs, whose urge, getting out of balance, becomes licentious in creating fresher needs, that cry out for satisfaction, resulting in the entire nation being caught in this vicious circle of needs and satisfactions, to the total break up of the personality of the nation. The nation's mind must undoubtedly serve the production of material means; but it should not become the servitor and the slave of material life. Providing science, technology and organisation is only one phase of the mind's role, the more important phase being the torch-bearer and the revealer of the meaning and purpose of existence, which alone gives the direction and control to the body-life. This way, body and mind should co-operate and serve to enrich the soul of the nation, the one element that elevates humanity from conflicting, confusing misery, to full harmonious happiness. It is this spiritual aspect of a nation's life, reflected in its arts and literature, that gives the direction, balance and glory to the entire personality of the nation.

realise his aspirations as a part of the whole society. All social schemes and ideas, institutions and organisms, are but the instruments created by the collective man, in the struggle for self-existence and self-development. Therefore, all social, economic, political, religious and cultural institutions, have justification to exist, only as long as they serve that noble purpose of man. Likewise the modern state, which has become an all comprehensive, powerful, multi-purpose organism of the human existence, derives the meaning and justification of its existence, from the deep instinctive urge of man for self-evolution. The acid test of the worth or otherwise of all systems and schemes, ideas and ideals and the innumerable institutions of the State, is the individual human being. Everything that aids the growth of the individual in all aspects of life, material, mental and spiritual, can stand; and everything that hinders should mercilessly go. The one thing that makes man a human being is his soul and therefore the elevation of the soul of man, through building up the body and the mind, is the fundamental urge of the human species. Man's collective existence, with the various forms and shapes and colours, it takes in changing time, can therefore have meaning only in fulfilling this purpose of man.

Human individual, whatever the cause, should not be sacrificed at the altar of the State, however big may be the men who man it. In the present world, there is an unseemly worship of the State. Men have thrown down and discarded God and on that high pedestal have placed the State. This

is the greatest tragedy of the modern man. Men at the helm of affairs feel that the individual is next to nothing and can be controlled and suppressed and even eliminated, for the spurious security of this something called State. The general mass of people, in ignorance, acquiesce to this position and meekly surrender their dignity and their soul to the power of the State. What is a State after all? Is it not just an instrument of the collective man, in order to fulfil his individual aspirations in co-operation with others? In the long history of man, religions and creeds, classes and clans, might have used the State for their narrow ends. But that does not change its basic nature, as an instrument in man's struggle for self-evolution. With the tremendous advance of science, when larger masses of men are becoming conscious of their worth and dignity, a State can exist, only on the voluntary will of the people.

of social necessity. The individual has to realise, that to provide himself with the necessary material and mental basis for his soul's elevation, he has to voluntarily accept certain limitations to his freedom, inherent in the smooth and orderly working of the Social Organism. These limitations should be inborn in the nature of the social system and not imposed by the whims of the powers, that rule for the moment. With the changing time, the nature of the social system changes and the limitations on individual freedom also change. When the system corresponds to the vital needs of the individual, he voluntarily submits to it.

This problem, of balancing social justice and individual freedom, has become very important in the world to-day. Nations, in the recent past, have given over emphasis on one aspect, to the detriment of another, resulting in imbalance of life and consequent friction and conflict, leading to a severe obstruction to the growth of the individual personality. The individual surrenders his freedom to some extent to the collective, only because he expects it to build a just, social system, necessary for his growth. If the collective fails, it cannot claim the obedience of the individual. Out of natural necessity, man has developed the social instinct. He needs society, both to live and to grow, whose form at any period can exist, only as long as it serves the individual purpose. It is the great task of India, in the atomic age, to create a harmonious system of society, which offers economic justice and the individual freedom. Man is

not created and does not exist for the sake of a State, system or scheme.

India must, therefore, plan to create a strong and healthy nation-body and a clear and sound nation-mind, out of which shall blossom the nation-soul, that shall permeate the spirit of harmony and happiness, within and without its borders. Taking the experience of various nations and seizing the spirit of its ancient heritage, it must evolve a new culture, that stands the challenge of the atomic age, a culture that shall inspire brother people to evolve their own spiritual being, in their own way. She shall always keep the great evolutionary human purpose before her mind's vision and in its light derive her aims and aspirations, that give life and direction to all her plans. Thus, can India, fulfil its destiny, its role, in the gigantic human journey and aid in the evolution of the great human family, in one unified world of several nations, different, but not dis-united, bound by the same human spirit, in one great culture, marching hand in hand on the glorious path of the Divine Being.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF  
PLANNING LIFE

THE world-wide urge for planning is a definite sign of the evolution of the conscious human being; for, to plan is to consciously act. Planning for the individual and for the nation, is a sure symptom of the growing maturity of the human race. From mere acting out of circumstances, impulses and imitations, to acting out of purpose in creative construction, is a big step. But, it is yet too much to say that humanity has completely evolved a conscious, creative and purposeful direction of its affairs of life. Still, in many things, the human race continues to be a victim of circumstance, driven by impulsive reaction and tempted by easy imitation. The process towards conscious creation has been steadily advancing, but it is yet a long way for fruition. It is the sacred task of that section of humanity, that constitute the thinkers, leaders and teachers, who wield an influence in society, to grasp the vital truth of the human process and aid it on to fulfilment. They should therefore have a clear appreciation of certain fundamental factors in planning. The soundness and success of a plan, depends on the worth of the planners. They must richly equip themselves in

accordance with the weight of this great task. They have to imbibe the spirit of their national culture, capture the lessons of history and realise the fundamental laws of nature and man, to be able to give a conscious direction to creative planning, of the entire resources of the country, in men and material, towards a definite aim.

Man, being an integral part of nature, its evolutionary pinnacle, deriving his very existence from it, will have to formulate his plan, in accordance with the plan of nature; otherwise, he acts in contradiction to it and ends in failure. Nature's plan is revealed to us, through certain fundamental laws, which form the basis of the cosmic order. Man lives in nature and by virtue of it, knows nature and himself and his knowledge, he utilises to develop his being. This is the fountain source of all science of life. If there were no order in nature and no fundamental laws of existence, there could be no understanding of nature and so, no purpose in human existence, no conscious effort, no direction and no plan. Humanity evolves, in correct proportion, to the level of its understanding of nature. Therefore, to live scientifically, is but to live in tune with nature.

stars, whirling round one another in space, at a tremendous velocity, in the allotted spheres and direction, exists on a perfect rhythm. Likewise, the life and stability of the atom, the smallest universal particle of matter, is maintained by a balanced rhythmic movement of the electrons and protons, that whirl within its womb at a tremendous velocity. Plant and animal life reveal the same rhythm. In man, the most wonderful piece of creation, many systems and innumerable organs, are intricately but integrally wound into one harmonious being. Organisms, different from one another, in nature and function, are brought together by the supreme purpose of life, in one balanced combination. If we reflect on the entire complex mechanism of these innumerable organs, their nature and function, we will realise that the human being exists on the law of Rita, with the various organs fulfilling their allotted tasks in correct measure and all receiving their proper value and proportion, from the role they play towards the general purpose.

Just as order is the basis of stability of everything in nature, change is the basis of all growth and evolution. Everything changes nothing remains static. Change is the law of existence. Life continues through change, as change is growth, the process of fulfilment. Changes begin in the quantitative factor, leading on to the qualitative, when one form yields place to another, in an eternal cycle of birth, growth, maturity, decay, and death. When some factors in a system change, the balance is gently shaken and this creates an urge for a



corresponding change in other factors, so that once again the balance is restored in a new set up.

All existence is an integration of diverse parts. Everything in matter and life, differs from everything else. Things, persons and nations are diverse in nature and function. But they are all integrally bound by the purpose of creation, in the same way as thousands of diverse organisms are integrated in the human being. Diversity is natural; it is not divergence. Integration is unity; it is not uniformity. Rita maintains itself through the creation of unity in diversity. All things in nature, animate or inanimate, are integrated wholes of diverse parts; all things exist on the basis of the rhythmic order and all things grow through change, quantitative and qualitative. One state leads on to another, which in its turn leads on to the next, *ad infinitum*, the process expressing as cause and effect or means and ends. Cause leads to effect, which in turn becomes a cause for a further effect. Means and ends are but two stages in a long process, ends becoming means for a further end. Change takes place; one dies to give birth to

Nothing is permanent, for, no life can be static and nothing is absolute, for, no value can be non-relative. Life is an integration of diverse factors, which change in time, and enable life to grow. One set-up becomes obsolete in time and will be replaced by another. " Old order changeth yielding place to new and God fulfils himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world ".

There can be no better model for the plan of construction of our social organization, than the perfect organism of the human being. It is a living ideal of a symmetric system. It is therefore the primary task of the planners to thoroughly understand the entire scheme of the human organism, and grasp the fundamental principles on which the whole structure is built and then begin to formulate their plan for the nation's organism. To them the purpose of the entire plan in all its stages must be crystal clear, because it is only in the light of the purpose, that the innumerable factors which come into the plan can be given their proper place, value and function. Over emphasizing or undervaluing any one factor is injurious to the balance of the total plan. Only when each factor gets the exact worth it deserves, from the role it has in the total scheme, there is harmonious functioning. Sometimes in our over zeal for unity, we may undervalue the need and significance of diversity and may try to impose uniformity. Or we may overstress the nature of diversity at the cost of the basic unity, without which no purpose can be achieved. When we succeed in a particular

period of time and situation, to create a system of balance and integration, we may in the glory of success become over attached to it and forget that the serviceability of a system can be only for a particular period and not for eternity. Time brings about major changes in circumstance and with it the needs and purposes of the individual and the collective change, necessitating a corresponding change in the old system. We should be conscious of this fundamental factor of life and perceive the need of replacing the old system by a new one.

Balance is certainly the most important aspect of a plan; but, in creating it, the plan should not be made rigid. Rigidity obstructs change that becomes necessary in time and therefore a rigid plan retards growth by creating friction in the system. Rigidity in ideas, plans and systems has been the biggest cause of conflicts in human affairs. A particular situation demands a particular scheme. We formulate it and achieve it. That very moment it gets solidified, just like ideas that were fluid get rigid, the moment they are codified in a particular form. And often-times the person, or group responsible in the construction of the scheme consider it as their own, their Ego, identifying itself with the scheme and the rigidity of formulation gets still more hardened. Therefore it is very necessary, that men at the helm of affairs must get out of this miserable identification of their Ego with the schemes. They must keep their faculty of creative thinking alive and sharp, so that it can resonate at the slightest touch of the changing time. If we are not alive to the call of changing

times and fail to consciously aid it in its normal, gradual process and if in our egoism or ignorance we obstruct it by rigid thought and action, dynamism of change accumulates and some moment it will violently burst out its fury, causing lot of dislocation and misery. The planners must therefore have the courage of conviction to give up anything once it fulfils its purpose, notwithstanding the fact that once it was hailed to the skies. They must know that a scheme which had immense worth in a particular set up, may be obsolete and worthless in a different set up, as all worth and value are relative to time, place and purpose.

All those who to-day have the role of planners of human society, have indeed a very great position and therefore their responsibility is also equally great. Men come to positions due to various factors, only one of which is intrinsic worth. It is therefore of supreme importance that they first know themselves fully, so that they can realize their proper place and function in the entire scheme. If they fail to evaluate their relative worth and role and arrogate to themselves the position of the supreme monarch and dictate or impose their preconceived notions and schemes on human life, utilizing the power incidental to their position, they completely distort and disrupt the social scheme and cause untold havoc and misery in the nation's life. Social position always gives power; and power corrupts, unless one knows himself fully by conscious efforts at building his own personality in balance and rhythm. An unbalanced

and disorganized personality is bound to project his weakness and conflict to his construction.

Planning is not regimentation. Planning creates while regimentation kills. Our basic task is to plan to provide equal opportunities for all; but that does not mean compelling everyone to fit into a particular pattern or scheme through rigid regimentation of work, education, culture and all aspects of life. It means only removing artificial barriers and affording the basic prerequisites for a natural growth. "It is like giving rich soil, good manure, proper weeding and enough water to the plant and allowing it to grow according to its nature, instead of twisting its shape or form according to our preconceived notions or choice". Regimented uniformity is against the law of nature. We must recognize and respect diversity and integrate them with the unity of purpose.

To be a sound planner, a project engineer must be acquainted with the physical laws of nature and by their aid study the situation and material at hand and formulate the plan of action. To be creative and not merely mechanical, he must also have a general acquaintance with the laws of nature and man. Likewise the planners of the human order, these human engineers, must be scientists of man and life, well acquainted with the laws of nature and of the human species, so that they may study the past and the present, seize the evolutionary threads and plan the weaving of the future. The work of a project engineer is child's play compared with that of the human engineer; because, the material he has to deal with

is animate, with body, mind and heart, a material that is swayed by emotions, impulses and sentiments, a material that has been conditioned and influenced by complex historical circumstance, economic position and social situation.

Little minds and great tasks go ill together. Therefore the great task of nation-building needs the noblest of men. It is not enough if they merely know the fundamental laws of existence; they must live them in their lives. Only they who have achieved balance in their own life can create. Without this, all learning of science or technology or history, shall not help them in their onerous task. Balance or *Rita* is the basis of life. Order is creation; disorder is destruction. Order is beauty; disorder is ugliness. Order is morality; disorder is immorality. Order gives life; disorder brings death. This fundamental principle of life must become part of their own being; for, what the planner is, so the plan will be. Only he, who is intellectually equipped for his role, who has the wisdom of experience, whose roots are firm in the great Indian culture and in whom body, mind and soul are well integrated in a balanced personality, is the noblest planner. Only he has the natural worth to guide the destiny of India in this momentous period of the history of the world.

In the long process of human life, man, in the individual and the collective, has been seeking to understand nature and himself, in order to achieve a life of goodness, peace and joy. He has dived deep into the objective and subjective worlds and

culled out the secrets of existence, without which it is not possible to create a rich and happy life. World history has not only thrown up India into the gaze of the world, but placed upon its shoulders the most heavy task of creating a new way, a new outlook and a new system of life, where there is no place for conflicts, wars, hungers and misery, where there is full scope for the flowering of the human personality, where the individual co-operates with the collective and the collective serves the individual and where there is harmonious integration of the material, mental and cultural or spiritual needs of the human species. The rich material and mental wealth, the west has mastered through science, technology and organization, has to be counterbalanced with the cultural and spiritual wealth of the ancient Vedic east. Mere revival or repetition of the past or blind imitation of the one by another or even simple adding up, is not what is demanded by the spirit of time. What India ought to achieve is a rich fusion of the two cultures, a living synthesis, out of which shall evolve a new outlook and a new culture for the entire humanity.

Success or failure in this great task, depends on the ability of the Indian people in understanding the needs and purposes of present humanity, the significant features of the time-spirit and the fundamental nature of man and life. If we can achieve a conscious direction of the affairs of our national life and plan with that noble purpose in view, we shall succeed. But it must be realized that conscious direction cannot be had without

persistent effort and intelligent reflection. We have to start with what we have and in time achieve conscious control. We may make mistakes; but they need not deter us, if we can learn from them. Creating the material basis of our existence can be achieved, only by a corresponding effort at improving our mental basis and this can have the necessary dynamism and sincerity, only when it is permeated by our new attitude and outlook on life, and new human culture. Our plan, that gives the direction to our collective life and effort, should be aimed at the integrated development of the individual human personality, the rich flowering of the soul of Man. Thus alone can we build a new nation with a harmonious culture and fulfil our historical destiny, in contributing our little offering to the evolution of the world people, into one human family.



### III

## INSTRUMENT OF COLLECTIVE EXISTENCE

OUR country is quite rich in natural resources. In building a nation, material resources are no doubt important. But our growth depends not only on what we have, but on how we use it. Herein comes the human factor, the most important in all planning. Even a sound plan may come to nought, if those who implement it are not equally sound. The organization of the human factor, in tune with the central purpose of the plan, is the most important task. Old forms do not suit to new purposes. Noble aims need noble content and character in the human machinery.

What shall be the nature of the instrument, that can constantly hold its vision on the historical purpose, with an understanding of the fundamental factors of life and formulate the concrete plan of action, implement it, evaluate it from time to time and make changes necessary? The instrument should undoubtedly be democratic in the real sense of the term. It should gather within its fold the best intellect, the best talent and the best character of the entire nation and win the faith and active co-operation of the people. For a superficial observation, a dictatorial instrument may appear more convenient in bringing quick returns.

It is an illusion. Dictatorial organization kills the initiative of the people and reduces them into non-thinking automatons, cutting at the roots of the main purpose of nation-building. In the light of the spirit and content of real democracy, new forms of democratic apparatus have to be evolved. But we can create what we need, only on what we have. We have to clearly understand the existing apparatus, before making changes necessary for the new purpose.

We have the parliamentary form of Government, based on the party system, introduced by the British after their own pattern, to suit their imperialistic needs. Into that, we have incorporated adult suffrage, with direct elections and this has assumed a recognition, which very few question. But a calm reflection will show, that this form has some serious defects, making it inadequate as an instrument of real and complete democracy. In evaluating the character of the existing state apparatus, parliamentary and administrative, we should guard against equating the content of democracy, with the form at a particular period. Human mind has a peculiar hankering after some security and therefore it often gets itself into a fascinated attachment to a particular form of democracy, unconsciously identifying it with the content of its conceptions. We are likely to equate our ideal notions of democracy with the existing parliamentary form of party Government, whose adequateness we have ceased to question. By the pressure of long habit, our minds fall into an attitude of considering certain man-made

centralized state. Russia, wedded to a policy of physical force and war, either for defence or offence, in an international set up of nations, to whom war was a potential means of existence, surrounded by enemy nations, was driven to the blind necessity of building a rigid, centralized state of the totalitarian type. But in the present international situation, when war, though not yet completely eliminated from the policy and mental make up of national states, has at least become a nightmare, threatening almost the total annihilation of the human race, for a country, wedded to the policy of peace and non-violence, it should not be a necessity to centralize. On the contrary, amongst all the nations, this country, with the strength of its great historical heritage, is the one that should boldly experiment with a decentralized system of collective life. The argument, that rapid economic development and unification of the country, without which our political Independence may be in jeopardy, needs some sort of centralized state, is incorrect, as a decentralized state apparatus, need not be little technological development or the economic unification of the country, under a well formulated plan of action.

Centralization necessarily results in uniformity, which, being against the natural order, impairs the efficiency and smooth working of a system. Decentralization recognizes the natural diversity and gives it full scope, while uniting all the diverse forces with the central purpose. A centralized apparatus becomes rigid and impervious to change in time; while a decentralized structure

has the necessary flexibility to absorb all changes. Centralization in economy, results in large unevenness in the economic status of various regions in the country; while decentralization, by the equalization of wealth, cures the present wide disparity, and aids the inculcation of democratic equality in our vast country. Economic centralization necessarily leads to political centralization; and political centralization encourages the economic, resulting in a severe narrowing of the democratic way of life. It is therefore necessary, that both economic and political decentralization must go hand in hand, in the long process to full democracy. Power to the people does not mean a few men at the top, however great they may be, wielding all power in the name of the people. Power to the people can be real only when the local organizations of the people, at the base, are endowed with real power over their affairs of collective life. Concentration of political and economic power in a few capital centres of the country, militates against the real democratic life of the people. Power primarily must belong to the village republic and only in certain aspects of life, which in their very nature cannot be manned by the village, power need belong to the higher bodies.

health and social welfare. In the light of the general purpose and principles of the national plan, the village republic shall undertake the practical implementation, in accordance with the local situation. The higher bodies shall not have the authority to interfere in the actual working, but can only give friendly guidance. They shall be forums for exchange of experience. The village republic will have both the representative and the parliamentary wings. To select the representative body by the unanimous will of all the adults of the village, is the ideal system, as that alone will completely eliminate the basis for groups and divisions and factions. The present system of elections, based on bare majority, is not only undemocratic, but has led to the breaking up of the village into war-like factions. It is no wonder that the people to-day ardently wish to be relieved of this menace. Unanimous selection is therefore, a sound principle for the constitution of the village republic. But, from the practical consideration of the situation, election by two-third majority may be introduced, only to be shortly re-placed by unanimity. This representative body will have full control over the administrative wing, for the proper discharge of its duties. The people will have also the right of recall of the representative, which alone gives them the sanction, to see that the representative stands true to his duties. An intimate association between this body and the people will grow through frequent meetings of the entire adult population, where all issues can be thoroughly discussed, so

that the people are encouraged to take active initiative in the planning of their collective life.

It may be said that this system of village republic, presupposes a level of consciousness in the rural area and so, its implementation among the so-called ignorant people, may result in these bodies committing many mistakes. How then to develop the consciousness of the people? No amount of preaching can create it; only action and experience can. Let them make mistakes, for who does not. Even those at the highest levels do. To err is human; but, to correct is divine. In a centralized system, when somebody at the top commits a mistake, repercussions are spread far and wide and their harm is equally great. But in a decentralized village republic, even a big mistake cannot injure the adjacent area. And the unearthing of a mistake and exposure of the persons responsible, becomes easy and quick and so the correction also become very easy and quick. In a centralized system, the people, standing far aloof from the State structure, not only do not know what is happening in an organization, which has to do much with their life, but find it impossible to correct it, by impressing their opinion. This absence of living contact between the administrative apparatus and the common man, has resulted in a complete apathy in them. People simply do not mind what is happening in the State apparatus. They are made to feel that the State is their master, which they must simply obey. This attitude kills all initiative of the people, without which no real progress in a democratic way of life is possible.

This is the reason why, a centralized apparatus creates a feeling in the people, of always looking up to somebody else, for the satisfaction of their problems. Centralization demands dependence of the people, which kills all dynamism. If we have to secure the willing co-operation of the millions of our common people, the only means to get it is through their intimate association with their own village republics. The principle of decentralization should not be taken in the letter, but in the spirit. Certain aspects of the collective life, in the very nature, have to be centralized. Except these, all else has to be decentralized. That does not mean, complete breaking up into unconnected, separate, totally self-sufficient units, which is impossible in the conditions of the present, when not only our nation has to be united in one purpose, but the entire world has to be brought into one co-ordinated system of the world-being.

The constitution of village republics must be preceded by a cleaning up of the enormous economic inequalities, that exist in the village fabric. Landlordism is the one central factor that causes economic and social inequality. To-day, the entire life of the village is polluted by this cancerous growth on the rural social body. The main occupation of the village, agriculture, is much hampered by this single factor. All the present organizations of the State, like the Panchayat, Village Court, Co-operative, are twisted out of their intended nature and exploited by the landlord clique. Even the police becomes a handy instrument for their oppressive

exploitation. With their hold on land, the chief economic factor of the people's life, they seize all the apparatus of the State and force them into the service of their selfishness. Without a complete removal of this cancer from the village life, if village republics are organized and endowed with real power, they must become dangerous weapons in the hands of exploiting section. That does greater harm to the people. Radical land reforms, that endow the tiller the complete right over the land he tills, is the basis on which the great edifice of village republics can be built.

When land belongs to the village, with the tiller having the right of enjoyment, the common man gains the real freedom of vote. He can boldly express his choice. He need not, in fear of any one, curb his heart and vote against his wishes. This atmosphere is conducive to the election of good natured and worthy representatives. Even the communal factor, which to-day has taken alarming proportions, in the hands of the landlord clique, will cease to be a force. The most important consideration, for the soundness of the village republics, is the creation of a salutary economic and social atmosphere in the village, where the most ordinary person shall vote according to his choice, which will take into account only three main factors: the character of the representative, his ability, and what he stands for. No other consideration should weigh upon him. This is the true meaning of vote and until we create the necessary atmosphere for the full and free expression of this choice, mere adult suffrage does not do much good.



This leads us to the question of the need and place of political parties in the constitution of the village republic. Do parties aid or hamper the free choice of the common man? Parties might have been necessary in an infant period of a democracy. But as it grows towards the ideal form parties become an obstacle. When real democracy demands the free expression of the common man, on the character and ability of the representative, political parties have reduced him to the sad position of voting for a name, a symbol, a colour, a leader or a vague ideal or for big names of personalities and organizations. Thus the political party infringes the real democratic functioning by robbing the people of their free choice, in the same way as the landlord does with an economic weapon. The very nature of political parties, whose one aim is to capture power, necessarily create the political vested interests, which are equal if not worse than the economic vested interests. Almost always both these interests combine and this cartelisation becomes the most severe instrument of exploitation. It is the death knell of democracy, for it uses the democratic demogogy to slowly annihilate all real democracy. How then can political vested interests be removed without removing their soil, the political parties? It is this soil on which to-day we see a luxurious growth of power-craziness, which is mutilating and poisoning the very vitals of our collective existence. Power-mad and wealth-mad men get hold of positions in various parties, for their own narrow, selfish ends and get so much

intoxicated with the power it offers, that they become total slaves of the power-demon and do anything to hold on to their positions. These little natured men cleverly utilize the haloed names of the great leaders and the noble traditions of organizations, to camouflage their dark and evil faces from the innocent gaze of the commoners, who are led away from any real consideration of their character. Today this venom is corroding at the roots of the most vital apparatus of national construction. To the power-politician, the needs of the country are of no concern at all and the party is only an instrument to serve his selfish ends. When such people grow in any party, the few honest men find it very difficult to retain the character of the party. By virtue of getting their position of power due to the influence of the party, the representatives will be forced, by the logic of the situation, to keep the interests of the party even above the interest of the nation. Whatever his individual opinion and feeling, he will have to simply toe the party line. Thus the representative of the people is bound down and restricted from his free expression. In course of time, the service of the instrument, itself becomes the main object. In this atmosphere, even most important changes in the society, despite a ripe situation, get bogged in the rigid mire of the party machine.

Our minds have been so much conditioned by long acts of history, that we to-day dare not even imagine any kind of democracy without the existence of parties. We are shocked at this

questioning of the justification of parties, as if it is like questioning the existence of the Sun. It is in the nature of our mind to regard even man-made things, with long history, in the same way as we regard things of nature and clothe them with the same sense of permanency. We must get out of these mental ruts and conditionings to be able to think fully and freely. It then becomes very clear to us, that for a democratic way of life, to be full and real, there must be a non-party political set-up of the state apparatus.

We must therefore keep this aim in view in our present planning for the nation. It is neither possible nor advisable to abolish the political parties by a decree of force. But we must plan from now for their elimination, by inaugurating the process of the gradual withering away of parties. Along with classes and along with the centralized state apparatus, parties too should wither away in the autumn of their existence and give birth to the beautiful, resplendent, spring of a decentralized, classless, partyless democracy, where the self-conscious individual is the basis of the entire social organism.

As a first sure step, in the process of abolition of parties, they should not be permitted, in the election of village republics. There is nothing in our constitution that recognizes the functioning of the parties; for the purposes of election, constitution recognizes only individuals. If in the solid base of the future democratic set-up, the village republic, we begin the elimination of parties, that shall start the withering process. On

that foundation of village life, organized into republics on a non-party democracy, the upper sections of the state apparatus can be safely built on democratic lines.

In the light of these general considerations, let us examine the state apparatus we have at present. The generally accepted principle in this form of state is the independence and interplay of the three wings, executive, legislative and judiciary. In actual practice, we see that even this elementary principle is given up, by the force of circumstances created by the party system. The leadership of the ruling party necessarily becomes the head of the Government. That means, the leadership of both the executive and the legislative wings becomes the same. Thus, in actual operation, the executive becomes all-powerful, reducing the legislature into a mere rubber stamp through the operation of the party machine. This leads to the infringement of the independence of the judiciary through legislation, whenever it feels that the judiciary has become inconvenient. All power is thus seized by the executive, which tends to become dictatorial. The Russian state apparatus is an extreme case, where through the rigid control of one party

party system, it is true, both these bodies will belong to the same party, but it is much better than the same set of persons having two powers. It is the possession of this twin power, executive and legislative and the consequential indirect power over the judiciary, that to-day makes the position of minister, the most attractive bone of contention of all power-politicians. This lure of ministership has to-day become the basic cause of terrific and obscene conflicts between political parties and of the formation of groups and factions, personal, communal, religious and linguistic, whose disruptive actions are threatening the very unity of the country. By reducing the power of the executive through its separation from the legislative leadership and through the gradual decentralization of power, the blinding lure of the position of minister will wane and to that extent, power-madness is likely to decrease in the political life of the nation.

The present parliament with about 500 members is a little too unwieldy for useful and sensible deliberation. In fact, those who actively and intelligently participate may be about a 100. The rules of parliamentary procedure, formulated for the party system, provide chance of participation only for the leading section of each party, while all the rest can only be on-lookers for most of the time. Apart from the absence of genuine interest in their responsibilities to the country, this enforced non-participation is also a cause of the generally thin attendance of our parliament. It looks as if we are continuing this very costly

system by sheer force of habit. When a system is found to be not fully fruitful of its purpose, it has to be amended. The Lok Sabha normally sits for about seven months in a year, leaving very little time for the representatives to fulfil their duties in their constituencies. To begin with, certain changes can be made, keeping in view the realities of the situation. The legislative leadership, in consultation with the executive, can prepare a plan of the legislative business for the current year and present it to the general session, when all members will have a chance to express their general opinion on the various issues. The session can then elect as many committees as there are items of legislation, each party electing its representatives on the basis of proportional representation, provided that no party be unrepresented in any committee. These committees can co-opt one or two experts, and continue their sittings and finalise the bills in the light of the general tenor of opinion in the house. This saves a lot of time being wasted in the general session on minor detail and verbal amendments. The second session may need to discuss and endorse the finalised bills. Only when there is a question of general policy or major principle the members have right to speak and not on mere details. Regarding the budget both the stages will have to be finalised in the first session itself.

The original intention of having the Rajya Sabha as a body of men who are above parties, with a broad outlook and with expert knowledge in particular fields of national life, has been almost squeezed out by the party-mindedness,

which has made it a duplicate copy of the Lok Sabha. The very form of procedure breeds a lot of tedious repetition of the same point either in the same house or in another, either by the same person or by another. This only dullens the creative thinking and sharpness of understanding of the highest body of the State. It should, therefore, be laid down that at least half of the members should be non-party leading men of Science, Economics and Art, who cannot be expected to join the vote-catching game without detriment to their field of activity.

The members of the Lok Sabha are chosen by direct election, which we consider a highly democratic method. We must remember that there are no absolute standards of judgement in life. What is right in a particular situation, may be wrong in another. That is the law of time and sequence. For instance, the method of nomination under foreign rule was bad, because it worked against the people. But now we see in actual practice, that the nomination of members for the Rajya Sabha by the President, has better served the original purpose, than the method of election by parties. Similarly, the method of indirect elections for the Lok Sabha will be in accordance with the present conditions in the country, giving better results. Direct elections may have meaning in a small country like Britain where perhaps a few thousands of voters elect a member and where illiteracy is almost nothing. But in our country, which is almost a continent, with a low literacy, asking about three lakhs of voters to

elect one member to represent seven lakhs of population, fails to serve the purpose. It is supposed that all the three lakhs voters know what a parliament is, what the duties of a member are, and are able to judge the character and ability of the candidate. Is it not too big a supposition? What therefore happens, is the poor innocent voter is beguiled by monetary, communal, religious or party considerations. One can see the nakedness of this truth, if one watches how on election days the poor voters are huddled into lorries and driven to the booth like sheep, by the landlords, money-lenders and other vested interests. As things stand, one can reasonably expect the ordinary voter to have the necessary consciousness to choose proper men for the village republic. He has every chance of knowing the person who lives in his area. So, these representatives of the village republics should be made the electorate for the Lok Sabha. One can possibly expect them to know enough of the country to be able to judge the worth of the candidate and there is a possibility of the Lok Sabha being more representative of the people.

The present scheme of direct elections is enormously expensive both to the State and to the individual. A country, which ought to concentrate its entire resources on nation-building activities, can ill-afford to spend lakhs on these elections. To-day the poor or the middle class cannot dream of standing for the Lok Sabha, whatever be his intellect and ability. Even for the rich, it is quite improper to make them spend thousands in



elections, because, the natural result is the creation of an urge to make up the money spent. This deteriorates the moral calibre of the members. Communal, sectional and religious feelings, that have grown in the soil of direct elections, will gradually wane away in the atmosphere of indirect elections on non-party basis. Considering the present situation with a realistic outlook, indirect elections for the parliament serves the democratic ideal much better than the direct.

All the above considerations apply with equal validity to the State Assemblies, and State Governments. Between the village republics at the base and the State bodies, there can be bodies at the district and taluk levels, organized on the same principles of decentralization and non-party democracy. If one can have a mental picture of the nature and quality of this system and compare it with the nature of the present system, in the light of the ideal conception of democracy, one can truly appreciate the vast difference in character, which makes the decentralized system nearer to real democracy.

In the present system, we get a state apparatus which is democratic only in form and not in content. In the days of the freedom struggle, when parties had to fight and sacrifice for a noble goal, communalism, casteism and provincialism could not throw up their ugly head, in spite of the encouragement of the rulers. But, once power came to the country, those very same parties, which fought these reactionary tendencies, took recourse to them in their mad fight for power. Elections becoming the most

important means of achieving power in a democratic country, the political party, crazy for power, used them and gave new life to these dying forces. Differences of religion, language, caste, community and even region, were shamelessly exploited under the cloak of big sounding ideals. By long and close association with these anti-people forces, the political parties themselves caught their diseased outlook, with which they infected the whole country, that even a tiny village is not free from this poison. In this situation, men of character and ability, naturally get disgusted and depressed and stand far away from this important aspect of collective life, in a democratic country, justifiably looking at it as filth. Men of character have individuality and so can never barter away their self-dignity, to join the dirty game of communalism and casteism for the sake of position, leaving the field free for men of little ability and no character, who become adepts in the game of power politics, for, they not only not shirk, but take pride in wallowing in the mire of communalism. In this age, when the State is gradually assuming ever-widening importance over the individual and collective life, to crown stupidity, incompetence and characterlessness and handing over the destinies of the nation to that caucus, is simply suicidal to a nation's being. Instances are tragically considerable, where a minister does not have the elementary ability to understand the subjects of his portfolio and is so much devoid of character and culture, that he blatantly goes about administering corruption, nepotism and favouritism

in the entire apparatus of administration. The number of so-called peoples representatives, who neither have the intelligence enough to participate in the proceedings of the Assembly nor the interest to learn his job nor at least the character to prevent them from abusing their position, is really appalling. In the party system, a representative, once elected, will naturally try to hold on to his position and so will have to satisfy the demands of all those vested interests, on whose support he relies. Likewise, a minister has to satisfy the group of members, without whom he could not have secured his position. This is the logical compulsion of the party system, which even an honest man cannot resist, unless he does not bother about retaining his position.

The first step to eradicate an evil is to remove the soil that breeds it. The evil of communalism to-day breeds on the luxurious soil of party politics. In an atmosphere of huge disparities in property and income, which endows the vested interests large influence in the collective life, this party politics for power, has become the one potent factor in obstructing the growth of democracy in the nation. Superficial treatment of the symptoms, without attacking the disease at the very root, will be of little use. Elimination of the vested interests by rapid equalization of wealth, along with the bold introduction of non-party democratic system, is the only sure cure. These measures will liberate the individual from the bondage of economic and political vested interests and create the freedom necessary for the growth of his personality. In the

ultimate analysis, what the state will be, depends upon what the individual is. In a non-party democracy, the individual is not dependent on a party for his political existence and so need not belittle his self-dignity. Dependence on any factor extraneous to one's self, leads to the diminution of his self-worth. Representatives in a non-party system have to depend only on their character and ability ; this compulsion of changed circumstance must lead to the development of the nations character. He need not go against his conscience and toe the party line, but can consider all issues on their merits and express his free opinion. He need not cater to the desires of his party-men, for he stands on his intrinsic worth. He need not spend huge sums of money and be compelled to earn it back. Only then can he be a true representative.

In the parliamentary party system, the chief aim of all parties cannot but be capture of power. Each party, with its own aims and programmes, tries to gather the loyalty of the people and utilize it to seize power. So, strengthening of their respective parties becomes the supreme purpose and it is no wonder if parties place their interest above the nation's interest. Their whole outlook is vitiated by this narrowness. Every event in the nation's life, whatever its nature, or worth, will be considered in the light of party interest and accordingly utilized. Whatever the other party says or does, even if it is in the people's interest, must be opposed, by either mis-representing, mis-interpreting or contorting it out of shape.

How then can co-operation, right understanding and breadth of vision come about in this atmosphere of conflict? How can the great task of nation-building be accomplished without a constructive attitude? When political parties, which are important factors in the nation's life, in the present set-up, have become narrow, rigid and non-creative, is it not really difficult to undertake the development of the life of the individual and the nation? Even the successful implementation of the limited objective of the Second Five Year Plan, needs the constructive and creative co-operation of the millions of the common people. How can we achieve this as long as people's minds are infected with the disease of communalism, casteism and partyism? Can it be done except by a bold and creative venture in non-party democracy?

By narrow, sectional and mutually antagonistic attitude, parties actually hinder the solution of national problems, injuring the people's interests. The object of all parties is supposed to be to change the present social order, for a better and a happier one, of equality, justice and freedom. To achieve this purpose, each party tries to unite the nation behind their particular ideology and programme. This, in actual practice, instead of bringing about the unity of the people, divides them into mutually hostile camps. Parties have merged with the existing factions or have created new ones. The psychological division, that parties bring about in the people, is worse than the physical. People's thinking is so much bound,

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conditioned and circumscribed, that they refuse to see beyond their respective party-prisons. They become incapable of free and creative thinking, without which no real understanding is possible. Social change cannot be had without change in people's thinking and that depends on a free exchange and evolution of ideas, between various sections of the people. But each party sits in its own little shell and looks at everything from its narrow angle and attitude, refusing to recognize any other angle or attitude, as genuine. In this atmosphere of mutual recriminations and mud-slinging against one another, by men, whose minds have been totally enslaved by narrow dogmas and doctrines, the common man gets confused and demoralised and sinks in lethargy. Thus, parties have become the biggest obstacle for any real propagation of new ideas and for genuine evolution in the thinking of the common man. Having become rigid and petrified by time-barred dogmas and doctrines, parties have become an obstruction to change in life and in values. They have degenerated into competitive concerns, trading in power. In the atomic age, when the real unity of Man, based on a realization of the oneness of the human race, can save the world from extinction, parties, that revive and feed upon the old divisions of caste, colour and religion and foster new divisions of creed and class, have become dangerous anachronisms. When the age calls upon man to flower into a free and full human being, parties reduce him into an unthinking tool. Human individuality is restricted, its growth smothered



and its spirit enslaved by the party machine. If man has to evolve, parties must go, just as classes should. Only in the disintegration of classes and parties, the State will begin to wither away, in the glow of the self-conscious human species. India, therefore, has to plan, here and now, for one-party, democratic set-up of the State.

Having considered in general the nature of the democratic State apparatus, we come to the question of the guiding force. The nation needs a body at the apex of the entire structure, that gives the direction and the sense of purpose, to the life and work of the collective. It must be a body, that has grasped the fundamentals of the individual and the collective being, on the basic principles of nature's existence, that has a sound historical perspective of the life of man, his present situation and his immediate and ultimate aims, that is inspired by the historical destiny of our country and can infuse a sense of purpose in the entire nation, giving a path to the vast multi-natured efforts of the people, introducing necessary changes in changing time. Let us venture to call this body the 'Supreme Council of Sages'. In ancient India, the king was not the law maker; he and his ministers were only the executors of Dharma. It was the sages that gave the law. Likewise, the cabinet should only be the executive head; the principle and the direction will be given by the Supreme council. Who then do we consider a sage? One who not only knows but lives the truth of existence, one whose life and outlook is balanced, one who is clear about the human

purpose and who has caught the course of evolution, one who has not only ability and intellect but character and culture, one whose self is not limited by caste, community, religion, party, ideology or language, one who is truly human and capable of immense work, in perfect non-attachment,—he, verily, is the sage. It is these men, that have the natural worth to guide the destinies of a nation; it is only these men that can evoke a spontaneous affection and loyalty in the millions of the people.

A supreme council composed of such sages, in the present circumstances, is not easy to achieve and must remain the ideal for a considerable time. A noble ideal is always necessary, that our practice may aspire towards it. In our country statesmen like Pandit Nehru and Jayaprakash, saints like Vinoba, scientists like C. V. Raman and leading men of economics, sociology education, literature and art, who are not only luminaries in their special field of action, but have an integrated conception of life,—such men can be the guiding lights of the nation. The time and energy of these men should not be frittered away in routine administrative duties. They must have the necessary atmosphere for creative thought and action; their energy should not be squandered in works which lesser men can do.

The supreme council will concentrate on understanding the multifaced situation in the country and lay down the basic principles and direction, on which the national structure has to be built, and leave the actual implementation to the various

peoples' bodies at various levels in the decentralized non-party democratic system. Just as an infant needs guidance and protection of the parents till he grows into an adult, so also an infant nation in the task of development needs this supreme council, whose main purpose is to aid the natural growth of the individual and the nation. In no case shall it infringe the free expression and activity of any unit, by imposing a rigid pattern to which all will be compelled to conform.

Pandit Nehru has done a good thing by the country in forming the National planning commission and trying to get into it men of real worth from the several fields of the nation's life. This is the only wise way of securing the services of eminent men and gathering the best of talent, wisdom and experience of the country. Because men of real worth, concentrating on various aspects of life, cannot be expected to enter the game of vote-catching power-politics. If any one does, his concentration on his field of activity gets disturbed, impairing his contribution to society. So such men should, by their intrinsic worth alone, have a rightful place in the planning commission. Undoubtedly it should be superior to the cabinet. In actuality, by the very force of circumstance, planning body is bound to become superior, whatever the opinion of those who are unable to get rid of their old moorings. The planning commission of to-day has to gradually evolve towards the ideal supreme council of sages. To aid this, it is necessary to separate the executive and the legislative leadership at the centre and the provinces.

Representatives of the central executive and legislative leadership may be members of this supreme council. Each state can have two representatives for their executive and legislative wings. These men, together with the eminent men of the country, become a fairly worthy body at the helm of affairs, in the significant period of our nation's life.

The supreme council may divide itself into various groups, for the various aspects of human life. It must have two important wings: an apparatus to receive all the opinions from different bodies in the country, scientific, cultural, economic etc., and also from individuals and set them in proper form for the council's consideration; and second, an 'eyes and ears department' of energetic men, inspired with the new outlook on life, to constantly go about the country and watch the various aspects of implementation and gather the opinions of the common people, so that the supreme body may be in constant touch with the pulse of the nation.

Some thinkers, who consider the concepts of equality and freedom in the abstract sense, may see in this supreme council the seed of dictatorship. It is true that whether the supreme council develops into a dictatorial body or not, depends to some extent on the character of the personnel of the body. That is the reason why so much stress is made on the nature of these men, who guide the destinies of the people. With the gradual decentralization of power, political and economic, the danger of the emergence of dictatorship

becomes remote. Power does breed egoism, and so, these great men must have the self-realization to match its evil force. They should not encourage the slightest manifestation of hero worship, as that is but the reflection of egoism in themselves. Hero worship and the personality cult, which to-day have been so much nurtured, consciously and unconsciously, is dangerous to the free growth of the individual. It affects both the giver and the receiver. This has to be discouraged not merely in words but in deeds. To men who have a true realization of their self in this society, it becomes natural to shun all pomp and show, to discard all hero worship, for they have lost the least touch of the ego.

In this world there shall always be the leaders and the led. We cannot escape it, as we cannot abolish the natural inequality between man and man. Equality means abolishing all man-made inequalities, which retard the growth of the individual. Natural inequalities will have to be taken into account in any sensible planning of society. Men are not born equal; they have different degrees of consciousness. It is but natural that those at the higher level lead those at the lower. But, in a democratic human order of society this factor should not be allowed to be used for the exploitation of man by man. When those at the higher level get greater share of the material and mental means of life, the soil is provided for exploitation. Therefore, levels of consciousness should not be the measure of the share of material means. All people, whatever

their level, should be provided with those means in accordance with the physical need and the mental aptitude of the individual. Equality cannot be understood and applied in the literal sense.

Like equality, freedom too cannot be considered in the absolute sense. Freedom is recognition of necessity. Only he who consciously recognizes, without extraneous compulsion, the social and natural necessity, can be consciously free. Till an individual grows into that consciousness, he has to be aided in his life's march and to that extent extraneous control and guidance become necessary. Control should not be compulsion; for compulsion is forcing an individual against his nature or 'Swabhava', while guidance is urging an individual in tune to his basic nature. This difference is very important and should be in the constant vision of the planners and leaders of human life.

For the actual implementation of the plan, the most important instrument of the state apparatus, is the administrative machine. Whatever the plan and whoever the planner, success largely depends on the nature, efficiency and character of the administrative machine. A new plan with a new outlook needs a corresponding change in the nature of the administration. It is necessary to dispassionately evaluate the present apparatus.

The administrative machine, the imperialist rulers built for the main purpose of serving their vested interests, has been taken up by us in tact. Whatever changes we have made are only in the nature of additions or mere enlargements, while the basic content and form remain, centralized

bureaucratic and authoritarian, with the inevitable red-tape and corruption. It has no living touch with the people. To the foreign ruler, whose sole occupation was to exploit the resources of the people, the state is an instrument to maintain the political power, necessary to carry on their economic exploitation. So they had to create an instrument, that could command the people by force. All power was therefore centralized at the central, provincial, district and divisional levels, with all the key positions manned by the men of the ruling race. How can this instrument built for the purpose of the ruler, suit a different outlook and a definitely contrary purpose. Even the enormous administrative rules and regulations framed eight decades ago, still stand with little modification, despite vast changes in the life of the nation. We failed to recognize the need for radical change in the administration, with the advent of freedom, and so to-day we have the paradoxical situation of callousness, corruption and apathy in the machine, growing, with the growth of the free country. None can deny that corruption and apathy has largely increased in the post-freedom period. Barring a few individuals, the entire administrative apparatus from top to bottom is stinking with this disease. If one can dispassionately look at things, he can see that the most important factor which encouraged this widespread growth of corruption, is the shamelessly naked corruption of the so-called political leaders, who were nowhere in the freedom struggle, but shot up like mushrooms in the rotten

garbage of power-politics. It is these men without culture or character, who seized positions of power, through the force of money and communalism, that were directly responsible in spreading corruption. To-day it has become so powerful, that even an honest administrator is surrounded, clutched and enmeshed in the coils of this octopus. The very name of public servant has become a tragic euphemism, as his one aim seems to be to grab as much of silver as possible; and towards that end all his intellect is utilized to invent ingenious way and means. As the state begins to widen its field of activities in the various aspects of the people's life, the men in the administration are provided simultaneously with a bigger opportunity to serve the people and also a bigger chance to exploit their positions for selfish ends. Which way the administration utilizes the field, depends on the character of the individual administrator and the nature of the system. In the post freedom years, we have seen that the various departments of administration, old or new, have only successfully utilized the occasion for selfish aggrandizement, so much so that the general atmosphere is poisoned with this disease. As is the king, so are the people. Administrative corruption has infected a good section of the people of the upper and middle classes, who find it an easy path to get their things done. The educated and the richer sections not only acquiesce in the evil, but actually become accomplices. Corruption, with its attendant evils of favouritism and nepotism, abetted by partyism



of the vested interests, has become the most serious aspect of the problem of administration.

General apathy or widespread lack of interest is another disease in the administrative organism. The administrators only concern seems to be their salary or promotion or the extra money they can extort. Peoples welfare and national development have little meaning for them. They have no realization of their responsibilities and relationship to the people, who pay to feed them, and no desire to understand the problems of the country, and the plan to solve them. This apathy is complimented by a rapid decline of ability and efficiency, even from the unsatisfactory position at the time of independence. When money, influence and corrupt methods pay well, character and ability become liabilities and not assets in securing their job or maintaining it. This situation, with the not unquestionable practices in the selection of the personnel, where influences of diverse types are the main factors that count, and with the rapid decline in the educational standards of the Universities, cannot but result in general inefficiency.

Corruption, apathy, and inefficiency, this evil trinity, 'one abetting another in a vicious circle, deteriorates the general character of the administration. When with such an instrument of implementation, the nation is about to launch a plan of gigantic magnitude, one naturally shudders at the very prospect. In the few years of our independent statehood, these evils have been responsible for huge waste of public money in

various aspects of the nation's life. The facts revealed year after year by the Government's audit and accounts section are enough eye openers of the callous waste of the nation's wealth. Public works are very much over-estimated, almost double the worth of the actual work done, with the balance safely flowing into the palms of the contractors and the administrators. Sales and purchases of public property are done in an equally callous way. The corrupt administrator, the power politician and vested interests have combined into a conspiratorial ring to rob the nation's wealth.

In such an atmosphere, it is really a great risk to launch a huge plan of nation-building. Without attacking this disease at the very root, it may not be proper to place thousands of crores of national wealth at the disposal of such an instrument. It will be unwise to call upon the people to sacrifice, in contributing wealth through taxes and savings. The people will not ordinarily hesitate to pay their due to the nation, if they feel that their money is well spent. Well, has Prof. Mahalanobis said that however sound the Second Five Year Plan, it shall not succeed if the administration is not radically changed to suit the new needs.

What changes have to be made and how, is the immediate problem. Before considering this, let us realize that whatever the system of administration, its nature finally depends on the character of the individuals that constitute it. No system however good, can by itself build the character of the individual. Even a fairly good system can be twisted and manipulated by the characterless

individual. So any system can at best aid the development of the character of its constituent. If in a system, character and ability are at least not a liability but receive adequate recognition, to that extent it aids the development of character. Yet basically, character is a matter for the individual, who through experience and self-knowledge, has to develop. It is no doubt a slow and long process ; sudden or miraculous change is not possible. But the important consideration is to start the right process. From this view we have to consider changes necessary in the present system of recruitment, training and working of the administrative apparatus.

Centralization necessarily breeds the bureaucrat, by concentrating power in key positions and by cutting of all contact with the people. When power is thus centred in individuals, with the common people deprived of any say in the matter and when control and check by the higher authority becomes, in the very nature of the system, formal routine, the soil is provided for corruption, apathy and inefficiency. The people, among whom an official lives and works, can really judge his worth or otherwise, but to-day their voice has neither place nor effective sanction. Even if they take initiative and express their opinion about the wrongs of any official, usually nothing comes out of it, as the official in the higher scale will be more inclined to support his tribe. This has resulted in the general indifference in the people, who in spite of knowing the wrongs of the administration keep mum, without raising

their voice. Centralization also results in inordinate delay in the working, by creating the abnoxious red-tape of files, files and mountains of files. A simple petition, for a drinking water well in a poor Harijan hamlet, when there is the state provision and in the face of a real and emergent need, will take at the quickest rate of execution, at least a couple of months. The poor Harijans suffering for want of drinking water come to know of the Government's provision and present a petition to the Taluk Officer. The petition takes a good long rest in the Taluk Office before it goes to the Divisional Office, where it takes another spell of rest to come back to the Taluk Office and to the Firka Revenue Officer for inspection and remarks on the need of a well. He takes his own time and if he is well disposed to certify for the need, the poor withered petition once again goes to the Taluk Officer; and after the usual rest goes to the Technical Officer for remarks on the feasibility of the work, and if so, the estimate. He too takes his own time and returns it to the Taluk Officer, who leisurely sends it on to the Divisional Office for final sanction, where it will have to wait patiently for the benign signature of the great Divisional Officer. And once again the petition has to go through the same routine, for the fixing up of the contract for execution.

This is indeed a simple instance of the type of administration for the simple needs of the people; there are complex types, which need a close study to understand the wasting process. In this simple case, we see that the authority that actually

decides the need, feasibility and the estimate is the Firka Officer and Technical Officer, while the Taluk Officer is a mere post office and the Divisional Officer, just the signing factor. What purpose is served by these two authorities, who do not even look at the problem, except causing undue delay? In this whole picture, the people of the village do not at all find a place. Let us suppose there is a village republic and both the offices of the Firka and the technical posts are combined in one person. The village body can receive the petition and take a decision on the spot, with the advice of the combined officer. How much this procedure eliminates unnecessary delay and piling up of files can be well appreciated.

This decentralization of administrative authority, by giving to the lower levels of the apparatus that amount of power, justified by the realities of the situation, will not only eliminate delay, but check tendencies towards corruption and apathy. The people taking a living interest in the administration, will certainly enliven the attitude and the work of the administrator. The prevention of the piling up of files is no small gain. It is not an exaggeration to say, that the present day administrator has become a slave of files, so much so, file heaps have become a nightmare, devouring most of his time and energy. Files have so deeply entered into his being, that he has become a routine automaton, devoid of human approach. If the administrator must grow in creativity, he must be liberated from the tyranny of files. Even the technically qualified men in agriculture, irrigation,

education, health, police, prohibition, national extension and social development etc., all rely on this little village base of the revenue department and seek from it information, assistance and even execution. Yet these multi-purpose village officers are paid the grand salary of fifteen rupees a month. What ability and integrity can we expect from such an instrument in this situation? It is awful that even important statistics are sought from this instrument. Why wonder if our national statistics are wrong and absurd, as, at the base they are simply cooked up by a poor, hungry person; and why wonder if even good schemes go to dust in the village? At the provincial level, the minister, taking a cue from the assembly, sits with the big men in the secretariat and produces a plan. The head of the department throws the polished brick to the district centre, where the collector catches it and throws it on to the Divisional Officer. He catches it and throws to the Taluk Officer, who in turn throws it to the Firka Officer, who finally throws it to the village centre. Well! there is none to catch it there, and the poor lovely brick falls and breaks and gets into dust. This is the present end of all schemes. Whether the great Five Year Plan which is supposed to concentrate on the village development can succeed with this instrument at the base, is anybody's guess.

This instrument must therefore be changed, without any delay, if big plans should not go to dust. Bold land reforms, with the principle of land to the village and constitution of village republic, will alone provide the necessary instrument for

any big nation-building work. The village officers must be made regular public servants with adequate pay and be attached and made subordinate to the village republic. This village republic having technically qualified persons in agriculture and irrigation and with adequate financial and political powers, will serve the purpose of India on the road of national construction.

Securing this firm democratic form of administration at the base, we should proceed up the scale, step by step, pruning and adopting, in the light of the twin principles of decentralization and democratization. The top heavy apparatus of centralized administration can be very much reduced, as decentralization lessens the work at the higher levels. Elimination of red tape and the tyranny of files saves much time and energy of the administrative personnel, which can be properly diverted for the growing demands in the existing and new aspects of collective existence. It will also sharpen and enliven the mind of the administrator, by releasing it from the lazy dullness of dead routine. To work out all the details of changes in all branches of administration, needs a close study of the existing situation, in actual working process. Most of the departments can be re-educated and retrained in the light of the national purpose and can be fitted into the new system; but there is one that has to be totally overhauled, the police department. This important department in the collective existence of the people, which has constant and direct contact and which has not only to maintain law and order,

and role in the national life. The ordinary constable, being really important in the life of the people, must also be a man of character and culture. A pass in the pre-university course should be the minimum educational qualification for recruitment. They have to be given adequate training, which will provide them a general knowledge of their own self and of the individual's relation to society and the general situation in the nation and the world.

Decentralisation and democratisation of the administration, have to be complimented with necessary changes in the method of recruitment and training of the cadre and in the system of remuneration, punishment and promotion. The existing system of recruitment by the Public service commissions, composed mostly of the senior members of the services, cannot be said to be completely satisfactory. Despite one or two non-official members, these commissions cannot have the ability, experience and outlook necessary to evaluate the character and efficiency of the various types of persons, seeking to get into the administration. It is not untrue to say that there is scope for various types of influences, political, communal etc., to bear upon the selection. The examinations conducted at interviews and written tests and the insistence on a minimum educational qualification, does to some extent measure the ability and outlook of the applicant. But there is no way of knowing his character, which is not possible, however experienced a commission is. To change this in tune to the new purposes of



the nation, what should be done at first, is to reorganize these commissions with men, who at least approximate to the men of the supreme council. The central service commission may be formed with some of the members of the national supreme council, and likewise at the state level. These commissions can have the assistance of the head of the people's body of the area or the institution to which selection has to be made. They should study the present procedure of examination and make necessary changes in them, in accordance with the new aims of the nation. About character, which is the most important factor, the only possible way may be to insist on a conduct certificate by the village or town republic, in whose area the applicant ordinarily resides. The members of the village republic have some chance of observing the life and activities of the individual, prior to his seeking the job. Personal examination is more important than the written test. At the interview, if the members can ask questions not of a set type, but varying with varied individuals, keeping the main principles and purposes in view and with a basic understanding of human nature, it is not difficult to discover certain basic tendencies and characteristics of the individual. It is no doubt a difficult task, which a routine bound mind cannot accomplish. One's mind must be sharp and creative and at once sympathetic. All those that are selected in this way, will have to undergo a brief period of training in which they will be aided to think for themselves, on the general

outlook on life, based on real self-knowledge, which they should have been provided with, in the educational system; and thus get a right attitude on their particular job in relation to the entire national construction. It is supposed that the technological and practical training necessary for their work and the basic self-knowledge, have been provided at the educational institutions. Granting this, the method suggested may bring in fairly good results. Of course, it cannot claim any perfectness, for no system can be perfect in an absolute sense; it can at best closely correspond with the purpose it is aimed to serve.

Poor and inadequate remuneration, with wide disparities in the salary scale, a large absence of fear of punishment; and promotions, that make character a liability, are some of the factors that feed corruption and apathy. The unconscionably huge disparity that exists between the lowest and the highest levels, has no justification whatsoever, organic, social or human. Maintaining disparities in view of the incentive to work, may have some meaning in the present set-up, where money is the sole criterion of value. If society has to get over the wrong sense of values, by replacing money with social service as the criterion, wide disparities have to be narrowed gradually. All work whether mental or manual must be treated alike. Disparities also act as a check to the process of democratisation, as the higher paid person gets an authority incidental to economic status. The poor and meagre salaries, quite inadequate for even an ordinary living, when combined with

power over the people, cannot but encourage corruption. No public servant in any branch of administration, should therefore get anything less than the living wage, based on cost of living index and the present standard of average living. The highest salary need not be, even in the present set up, more than ten times that of the lowest. Salaries, much too high than the actual needs of a person, encourage habits of wasteful luxury, which have a tendency to constantly grow, necessitating corruption at the higher level. Simple living and high thinking is not a mere motto to be repeated by school children, but one to be correctly appreciated and lived in a nation's life.

Without raising the salaries of the lower levels to the point of living wage, there can be no moral justification for punishment of the wrong doer. Punishment and reward are very important factors in the administration. It is impractical to give up punishment altogether, on the mere idealistic considerations. Education and persuasion have no doubt a place in the running of the administration; but punishment also has an equal place. Ordinarily, all men need at all times both persuasion and compulsion, in proper proportion as the occasion demands.

In the matter of punishment, it is not enough nor is it fair to treat the administrator on the same par as any citizen, just because the administrator is not on a par with the citizen in the social life. He has a position, a power over other people, which the ordinary man has not, and therefore his responsibility must be great. The

weight of any crime increases with the weight of the person, and so the degree of punishment for the same crime ought to be directly proportional to the degree of responsibility. Therefore, apart from the ordinary law of the land, there has to be a special law for the crimes of the public servant, with a special and simplified procedure and special codes, so that the wrong doer has no chance of delaying or obstructing the meting out of punishment. The same principle should apply to all the non-administrative public personnel, whether in representative bodies, commissions, committees, institutions, etc.

There has to be a 'State control commission', to keep a constant study of the working of the entire state apparatus, administrative and representative. It must be manned by men of the stature of the supreme council, devoted to the nation's cause. The present intelligence branch and the anti-corruption department, cannot be considered to be satisfactory. 'Use a thief to catch a thief,'—is not a sound proposition; for, though the thief may be supposed to know the ways of a thief, the possibility of both joining hands in the game is often more likely. To entrust to men picked up from the police department, the most important work of anti-corruption, is wrong. It will be more fruitful to secure and train an entirely new cadre from among the people, who have been devoting their life to selfless work, in the various humanitarian and constructive organizations. This commission may work in unison with the 'eyes and ears department' of the supreme council.

This body shall receive information about the nature and working of the administration, from institutions or individuals, consider it and take all the necessary steps of enquiry and investigation, secret or public, and locate the wrong doer. This body needs the right of examination of all the public servants and all concerned records, in its area of jurisdiction. Treating the administrator who extorts a bribe and the person who is forced to offer it, on the same par is neither proper nor practicable; and is also not based on a correct and relative understanding of morality. The one who has the power to extort and the other who has no power to refuse, in the social system, cannot be treated equally. So the people who are made to give bribes, have to be protected and be taken into confidence, if their assistance in apprehending the administrator, is sought. In most cases, without their assistance, it is not easy to get hold of the culprit. People therefore have to be encouraged to come forward with the information in their possession, which may have to be kept a secret in many cases, so that they do not get into trouble. In all departments, there are honest men who will have to be encouraged to assist this work. It is not easy for an officer to hide his corrupt ways from his own staff. If they are taken into confidence the task becomes less difficult.

This control body must not only administer punishment, but help the public servant to understand his role in relation to the general purpose. It should regularly gather all officials of the same area or of the same department, along with the

non-administrative personnel of the area and help them to be aware of their worth and work. When a culprit is spotted out, the mistake must be shown to him in a way, that he thinks and feels about it. It should be discussed with his family and in the general meeting of the administrators of the area. With this, he may be given a chance to realize his mistake and to rectify. This sympathetic but public consideration of the issue will not only offer him a chance to correct, but will help to awaken in others a sense of morality. A second offence by the same person or a serious one, even if it be the first, has to be dealt very severely with deterrent punishment. Lenience is bad, as it dullens the sense of morality, in the apparatus.

In the present corrupt atmosphere, reward in the form of promotion, on considerations of character, merit and service, is becoming more and more difficult. Various factors and influences and corrupt deals get into the picture. Promotion should be a method of securing richer experience for the higher positions, and an incentive for honest and diligent work. Character and ability should therefore be the main consideration. Mere service, on which the present promotion rests, is just a rough scale to measure experience. Promoting inefficient or corrupt persons, blindly on the basis of the service register, results only in crowning those qualities. It is a natural consequence, that if the head of a section is corrupt or inefficient, he is bound to infect the entire staff with the evil. Therefore, promotion has to be



will not the infection spread into the entire moral fabric of the nation? Is not preventing this deterioration in the morals of a nation most important? Moral well-being of a nation is certainly as important as its material well being. Without uprooting the physical and material basis of the atmosphere of moral deterioration in the country, if national leaders give out huge and insistent appeals for moral regeneration, what results, in course of time, is the creation of a split personality in the nation. This is what has happened to-day in our country, which Panditji recently very sharply pointed out. This is more prevalent with the educated section, who are and will be leaders of society. When the material situation, with the hard circumstances of life, seize a person and drag him to immorality; while, on the contrary, the noble life of great men and our great heritage try to lift him up to a high moral stature, the ordinary man necessarily develops a split personality, talking and professing exactly opposite of living and acting. In recent years, this feature has become much marked in our country, with the power-politician at the top. This process must be checked, if the nation's moral being should not sink lower still. How much the evil of split personality mars the social life and brings misery even in home life, only a deep psychological understanding of human nature can reveal.



#### IV

### MATERIAL BASIS OF LIFE

A people's plan can succeed only with the active and conscious co-operation of the common people; for, nation building is in reality building the people. It cannot be denied, that to-day there is very little enthusiasm and initiative in the general mass of the people towards the Second Five Year Plan. The general apathy may not be as hard as it was in pre-freedom days, but it is yet considerably heavy. The attempts that are being made by the state apparatus to rouse the enthusiasm of the people have been mostly futile and useless, as they are not only half-hearted and unimaginative, but also because of the prevailing unhelpful atmosphere. In a predominantly agricultural country, which still maintains to a great extent the archaic, non-human and unscientific land relations, people ground down in exploitation, will have little faith and confidence in the very state apparatus that has to implement the plan. It is not surprising, if those millions do not have even a casual interest to know about the very plan, that is supposed to reconstruct their life. Most of them are so depressed and deadened in utter pessimism, that they are incapable of thinking of a bright future. With the old, centralized,

bureaucratic administration, which constantly instills in the people that they have only to obey the state, making them always to look up to it for even the smallest bit of work of their collective life, the picture of lifelessness in the vast rural areas, is complete. Can any planner dare hope any success, without rousing the spirit of these millions to shake off and shatter this all enveloping lethargy, lack of interest and pessimism. What radical and urgent measures are needed to help the people rouse themselves from pathetic torpor to living action? Mere oration and appeal, mere persuasion and propaganda, however intense and big, cannot rouse the people unless and until certain basic changes in the material situation are immediately wrought.

A poor humble villager, with no land of his own or with very little that cannot maintain him, with little or no education, steeped in poverty, labouring all his waking moments for the bare means of existence or in enforced idleness due to lack of work, meekly submitting to the exploitation of vested interests, with neither sympathy nor understanding from the local state apparatus, cannot but be totally apathetic to the work of national reconstruction. Yet, the urge to improve his life is not dead, but deeply dormant. The life-fire in him is yet alive, but is heavily covered up by heaps of ash, which has to be fiercely blown off by bold and dynamic measures, before thinking of rekindling the latent spark. Feed the body to rouse the soul, is the call of the immediate present. A starving body ends in a shrinking soul.

Without a sound body, there can neither be a healthy mind nor a happy personality. What is true of the individual is true of the nation. Therefore proper, adequate and healthy food is the first necessity of the nation's body, the main factor in the material basis of existence, on which the entire superstructure of society stands. Our education, culture, morals, our philosophy and our spiritual elevation, must rest on a stable foundation of a satisfactory material basis. It is true such a material basis cannot be created in a day; it is not achieved by miracles, but by hard and persistent effort of the vast millions of our countrymen for a considerable period. But, to begin with, the common people must at least be provided with the means of securing the most elementary and absolutely necessary minimum of food, to keep their body and soul in tact and must have a clear and not too distant prospect of more adequate means of subsistence. Without this, it is impossible to inspire the poor millions into confident activity. It is too much to expect them to see into the dim and distant future, to realize the glorious prospect and work for that with a vigorous enthusiasm. The vision of the common people is limited to the present and the immediate future. So they must feel some tangible change in the present condition and a concrete prospect of betterment in the near future. This alone can rouse the dormant spirit of the people, which once awakened, nothing can stop or smother. If the poor, ignorant Chinese peasant, ground down by ages of slavery, of imperialism

of diverse hues, of feudal tyrants and war lords and of the opium-stupor, could be roused into activity, surely the spirit of the Indian peasant could be better awakened, if only our nation takes the drastic measures China took, though in our own way.

Land is the supreme mother of all life ; it is the primary source of food, offering it in man's labour. The five great Gods, Prithvi, Ap, Thejus, Vayu and Akasa have not only created man, but sustain his life. To-day land, that great God, that mother of life, is enslaved and imprisoned in the callous clutches of a few, who utilize it to rob the labour of the many. The sons of the soil, having no right on land, lose the right on their own labour. This man made, callous landlord system is neither moral nor human, neither scientific nor practical. It has to be abolished at once, if man must remain human. Labour is noble ; for, it is labour that feeds life. So, only those who labour have a right to life, and to the enjoyment of the fruit of labour on nature. Those who live and work on land have the natural worth to enjoy the fruit of the soil. Land must therefore belong to the tiller. Those who do not labour on land should neither have the right of possession or enjoyment. Absentee landlordism is against the law of nature and the law of life.

But, the distribution of land to individual families, on permanent and complete right, is not proper, as it maintains and widens the desire for private property, which is out of tune to the spirit of time. It is the single root cause of all

evils of selfishness, greed and other acquisitive tendencies. Rigid method of distribution of land fails to take into account the many changes that become necessary, due to changes in population and improvement of technology in agriculture. The individual peasant family should therefore have only the temporary right of enjoyment, so that the extent of land may be changed in changing time.

Land to the tiller, in the sense of total right of ownership to the individual peasant, has become an obsolete idea, as it means rousing the selfishness of many against the selfishness of some. It may fetch some material gain to the people, but to the society it is dangerous morally. India need not imitate Russia or China in the solution of this problem of land; it should learn the correct lesson from their experience and avoid the wrong and round about process, of dividing the land among the poor landless with complete rights and then slowly starting voluntary or compulsory collectivisation of land. This is beginning with one wrong and ending up with a bigger one. While the one creates selfish desire for private property in the vast mass of the peasantry, the second kills all initiative of the peasant by reducing him into a mere wage labourer. Collectivisation may be useful to the machine, but is definitely detrimental to the man. The life of the peasant has to be closely wedded with the life of the land by living bonds, just as the life of the child is wedded to that of the mother. Collectivisation breaks this life bond by breeding

centralisation, which makes the peasant a mere wage earner.

India, therefore, has to give up these two extremes, of rigid distribution and collectivisation and boldly implement a new way, in tune to the spirit of the time. Land to the village, with the temporary right of enjoyment to the peasant is the new idea, that India should implement; which is not only in tune to the present age, but to our great ancient heritage. In the Vedic age, land was owned by none; it could not be sold or gifted. It was enjoyed in common according to the actual need of the tillers. Land essentially belongs to the village, to the country and to the entire humanity; every one who is prepared to labour can enjoy the fruit of the soil. To-day, this great principle has to be worked out in the solution of the problems of land and food.

We have so far done nothing really serious about this basic problem. The little land reforms that have been or proposed to be done, in the nature of tenancy legislation and fixing up of ceilings are too inadequate to the gigantic tasks of the country in the world to-day. These reforms are not the result of a deep consideration of the present age; they are just the outcome of routine thinking. It is really unfortunate, that eight years after the birth of freedom, we are yet hesitating and delaying to introduce even these small, palliative reforms. The landed interests have entrenched themselves in the state apparatus and the ruling party and with that position are obstructing and distorting these reforms. This leisurely way of

attempting to solve this primary problem will be ruinous to the entire activity of national construction. Great aims, need great action. India must have the will, the courage of conviction and self-confidence to do very big things in a really very big way. If we have the proper outlook on the problem of land, then all these little reforms can be quickly implemented, as a prelude to the great step of land to the village. If we do not have this outlook, we are bound to go the way other nations have gone and get entangled in the problems of our own creation. Ceilings on land holdings on the basis of income, is a fairly good beginning ; but it will be futile, without recognising the main principle, that no one who does not work and live on land shall own it.

India therefore has to declare, that from the moral, human and scientific point of view, land in a particular area belongs to the people who live and toil on it. India should organise village republics, to whom the problem of management of land will be entrusted. They can encourage the peasants to form into voluntary co-operatives. Unlike collective farming, co-operative farming has no extraneous control. The peasants combine as the situation demands, into flexible voluntary co-operatives. State farming is not welcome for the same reasons as collective farming. It may be taken up for a limited purpose of augmenting the revenues of the state or of developing mechanised methods of agriculture, only for a limited period.

Land to the village, and power to the panchayat,

are the two great ideas, that form the solid bed-rock for the entire superstructure of the nation's life. We can realise the immediate urgency and inevitability of these measures in national planning, only if we can look at our country in relation to the entire humanity, in the atomic age. But, if we are enmeshed in the immediate present and think and act in a routine way, all our attempts to plan and build the superstructure, without laying the foundation, are bound to result in half success, distortion and confusion. The Himalayan rural indebtedness, which is grinding down the peasantry, has to be wiped out by drastic legislation, with the state talking over the still outstanding debt and by banning money-lending, refusing to recognise it as a profession. Money-lending has been proclaimed as a sin by all religions; and so, the state has immense moral justification to wipe it out, by the organisation of adequate co-operative credit. The traders exploitation of the rural area must be eliminated, by co-operative sale and marketing organisations, manned by the village republic. Landlord, money-lender, and the trader are the three factors that sap the life blood of the real India of the villages; and so, as long as, they are not eliminated, India cannot arise into new life. We have perhaps not even seriously thought of this and so the present attempts in enthusing the people are ending in ludicrous failure. Even the great community project scheme, which has received wide publicity in and out of the country, conceived with noble intentions, cannot be said to have



succeeded, in its main aim of creating enthusiasm and securing the co-operation of the people for nation-building activities. The main principle of the scheme is to construct roads, tanks, schools, hospitals and such other social needs in the villages, by the state bearing one half of the expenditure and by securing the other half from the people, in the form of voluntary labour. The idea is quite sound. But however good a seed, it cannot sprout on a barren soil. In the present landlord, money-lender-ridden, rural economic and social life and with the same old, bureaucratic, corrupt administrative apparatus, the whole scheme is mutilated and distorted, by the vested interests, trying to utilise it for its own ends. Roads have been laid, tanks repaired, schools built; but, in most of them there was not the least contribution from the people in the form of labour. Yet, the official reports speak of the contribution of the people. It is all manipulated by the ring of officials, who manage the show; because, they do not have the honesty and courage to report the true state of affairs. A road, for which only about a thousand rupees would have been the normal estimate, would be estimated at double the amount, out of which one half is shown as people's contribution. The landlord, who usually takes the contract, compels the local labour to work on half the normal wage, so that the extorted half may be shown as contribution. In many cases both these devices have been combined. Such criminally manipulated reports are sent to the top men, who are too big to see the littleness of their men in

actual work. On that basis, they prepare a wonderful report of success; and poor Panditji takes it as truth and speaks it out to the nation. The other part of the scheme of giving loans of various types to agriculturists is largely devoured by the landlord class, through benami transactions. The rural vested interests, who in the present set up, become members of the project committee, use their position to utilise the scheme for their own ends. There are cases of poor peasants getting loans for bullocks or seed etc., only to be grabbed by the money-lender. Even the public latrines of the sceptic tank type built under the scheme, are conveniently located near the houses of the landlords, that they may use them as their private ones. This is the way, how even a scheme of noble intentions is bound to bear evil fruit in an evil soil. If therefore India has to fulfil its destiny, we have to prepare the soil by implementing the great measures of land to the village and power to the panchayat. The great sage Vinoba, by the sacred Bhoodan Yagna, is preparing the nation for great changes in life and outlook. By his relentless sacrifice, he is revealing to the country, that the basic problem is the idea of ownership of property, of wealth, of power and of position. If the statesmen at the helm of affairs respond to the call of the great sage, they shall be true to the deep spirit of their mother-land and fulfil their tasks in the present age.

India is a land of villages. Without reconstructing these poor, little, sinking hamlets, India cannot survive the atomic age. These lakhs of

little villages, where reposes the real nations being, are steeped in poverty, ignorance, disease, disunity and lifeless apathy. Unless fresh, warm and pulsating blood rushes into the veins of this village body, these diseases cannot be wiped out. Our state is no doubt planning to improve the life of the village, through varied schemes. It is all quite good in intention. But, where is the energy and the driving force? It is dormant in the people. Once that great reservoir of energy is tapped, rural reconstruction will take place in such a rapid way and at considerably less expenditure than at present, that the unimaginative minds, yet caught in ideas of old, will gasp in bewildering wonder. If the poor Chinese peasantry could rouse themselves and muster in lakhs and dig canals hundreds of miles in length in two or three months, why not his brother, the Indian peasant do the same? Let the Indian peasant liberate himself from the social and economic bondage; his native undaunted spirit shall arise in intense activity of reconstructing his life and rejuvenating his moral being.

Agriculture and industry are the two major wings of national construction. Increase in the national wealth is primarily increase in these basic segments, whose development is mutually complementary. The drawbacks in one necessarily affect the other, and so a plan of national development has to work out a balanced co-ordination between the two. Agriculture supplies the necessary raw material for industry; and industry in turn supplies, in the form of finished goods,



the development of the basic industry as the prime object of the Second Five Year Plan, having concentrated on the development of irrigation and power in the first. Heavy industry does demand a temporary sacrifice from the nation, which the people will have to willingly offer, in order to establish the foundation for future industrial growth. But this should not be carried to the extreme, at the total neglect of the production of consumer goods, as was done by post-revolutionary Russia. A balance has to be worked out, in consideration of the entire economic picture of the present. If the production of the most necessary consumer goods is not simultaneously developed, the imbalance will hit the very development of the basic industry, by narrowing the market for capital goods and by creating the demoralising atmosphere of scarcity, profiteering and blackmarket.

Deciding the nature and extent of the production of consumer goods, we have to face the problem of the method of production. Should it be through large scale or cottage industry? Or should it be by both? If so, in what proportion? This problem of the means of production is important in any stage of the national economy, as it is closely linked up with the basic problems of employment for the people and provision of their essential needs. Today in our country, where unemployment is seriously heavy, this problem gets added significance. We cannot afford to act in a mere unthinking routine; it needs a free mind, with a deep human approach.

Unemployment is the most dangerous seed, that sprouts diverse evils in the life of the individual and the collective,—immorality, crime, and other unsocial tendencies. Adequate and proper employment is absolutely necessary for a healthy life of a human being. But it should not mean a labour of drudgery. Throughout the long history of the human race, we see the spirit of man struggling against the conditions of drudgery and slavery, either in nature or in society, by discovering and utilising the secrets of nature, for his existence. It is this development of science, that is the basis of industrialisation. The one great change in human existence is the industrial revolution. Man created machines and put them to service, in order to be released from hard drudgery and also to increase the production of wealth. A nation's material wealth does depend on the nature and extent of the machine wealth it has. Industrial development, with the latest technological innovations, is necessary for the growth of production and for the liberation of man from inhuman toil. But this must have a limit; because, large scale industry necessarily throws out all those people, previously employed in producing the same goods by backward means of production, into sudden unemployment. Whether large scale industry is owned by the private sector or the public sector; the resulting unemployment is inevitable, except that in the latter case, there is some possibility of the state providing other means of employment to the victims. But large scale industry cannot be totally neglected, as that would mean lowering

of the national wealth and the productive capacity of the people. Therefore, the limit of large scale industry has to be worked out, in a proper consideration of the two factors of employment and production, in the background of the general economic situation of the particular period. Large scale industry leads to economic centralisation. In the age of electricity and with the dawn of atomic energy, it is no longer necessary to depend on huge large scale industry, which might have been necessary in the days of coal-power. Smaller decentralised units, whose size depends on the economic soundness of the cost of production, are the need of the age.

Our general industrial plan has to keep in view all these considerations. No doubt our primary task at present is to establish the basic industry, for which a huge portion of our resources need be utilised. But heavy industry, being capital intensive, is of no use for immediate employment. Providing employment opportunities for ten to fifteen million people is perhaps of greater importance, than creating heavy industry. This can be done only in the production of consumer goods, which in the present period necessarily should be done by cottage industry, which is highly labour-intensive. With the present little exploitation of our resources of electrical energy, cottage industry has to be largely run on man power. And therefore, the prices of goods of the cottage industry may be slightly higher. But it has to be tolerated in the interests of providing labour for the millions. If it is a question of





in which millions are hopelessly ill-clad and yet the cloth industry is forced not to work to its full capacity. This applies to all the consumer goods industry, whose growth being thus restricted and hampered, affects the growth of the basic industry, by narrowing the market for the capital goods. The key factor, therefore, in the whole system is the purchasing power of the people, whose increase is absolutely necessary for the growth of both the consumer and the capital goods industry.

This brings us to the question of the nature, extent and relationship between the public and the private sector. In the present situation, to maintain the predominance of the private sector is as unwholesome, as its total abolition. In a materially underdeveloped country, rapid development of national wealth, needs a considerable amount of state control on the general economy, even if it is sought to be built on a decentralised basis. State control is both political and economic. Control over the general economy by legislation can be effective, only if the state has control over the key positions in economic production. It is necessary to have the entire heavy industry in the public sector, to maintain a wholesome control over the private sector. In the consumer goods industry, state must have its direct hold on production, through joint-ownership with the private sector, in important industries, to an extent necessary for a commanding position. Control over prices and markets is not possible without control over the production of goods. It is also necessary for the state to have enough

hold on finance, through nationalisation of banking and insurance and through various saving systems. With these controls, economic and political, the state will be able to direct the private sector to work in line with the national plan.

One of the basic factors of industrial development is the production and supply of power. The discovery of steam and oil power inaugurated the industrial revolution, which was greatly accelerated by the discovery of electrical power. Electricity has become an important factor, both for industry and for the complex living of the modern man. Even this energy, which is yet the bed-rock of the materially advanced nations, will very soon become obsolete and pale away in the march of solar and atomic energy. Some day, Man shall succeed in harnessing the gigantic energy in the atom for peaceful living and that will herald an unprecedented revolution in the life of the human species. Our country, with little resources in oil not very rich in coal, has not only to build up its resources of electrical energy, but strive to capture solar energy, whose resources are almost illimitable and make persistent research for the peaceful uses of the atomic energy. Power, cheap and plentiful, easily produced, distributed and utilised, necessarily ignites the rapid process of industrialisation. Concentration on irrigation and production of electricity in the first Five Year Plan was a wise step; but what has been done stands too little in comparison with the actual potential of electrical energy of the nation. We

have therefore to continue our efforts in the production of electricity, in the Second Five Year Plan. Without the adequate supply of electricity in the vast rural areas of the country, the most important economic foundation, the decentralised cottage industry, cannot be laid.

Apart from the basic factor of power, the main components of industry are men, machines, material, money, management and market. Without a co-ordinated development of all these components, industry cannot grow in a rapid and balanced way. Dependence on other countries for the import of machines has to go as soon as possible, by the development of our own manufacture of capital goods. But, for a considerable time we will have to depend on industrially advanced countries for the import of technical skill, as it takes time to develop our own technicians. With our foreign policy of peace and friendship with all nations, we have a good opportunity of securing the genuine help of all the technically advanced nations. And our intelligent, educated, young men, if infused with the new outlook on life, are quite capable of catching up with those of the advanced nations, in science and technology.

Mineral wealth is an essential need for the heavy industry. The little geological survey done so far, promises quite a good source of all varieties of mineral wealth. We really know very little of the immense treasures, mother earth has in her womb. A thorough geological survey of the entire country in the shortest time possible, is very necessary. Mineral wealth being an important

material for industrial development, its production must be in the public sector. All mines have to be nationalised without delay. Adequate supply of various types of raw materials for the consumer goods industry, at economic prices, needs not only a co-ordinated development of industry and agriculture, but effective control on prices and transport. In the modern inter-related and inter-dependent economy, the problem of price control is very complicated and complex. No state however powerful politically, can have effective control over the price level by mere legislation, without having direct control over the key points in production and trade, of all the goods basically necessary for life. Control over production has to be accompanied by control over trade. These are two aspects of the same process. It is control over goods at two vital points, at production and distribution. Without the one, the other is ineffective.

Trade denotes the significant link between the two basic factors of life, production and consumption. Today in our country this most important aspect of life is completely in the hands of the private sector. Notwithstanding the considerable legislation in the statute book, there is actually no effective control on trade. Past experience has revealed this naked truth. A little shortage of food and other essential articles of life, was greedily seized by the trader and exploited for amassing wealth, at the sacrifice of the life of the common people. Stocks of goods in shortage were captured and cornered; and, by secretly hoarding

away from the open market, conditions of shortage were artificially magnified into conditions of serious scarcity. When the people's hunger reached the zenith, the hoarded stock was released through blackmarket, at unconscionably exorbitant prices. The tragic horror of the unprecedented Bengal famine and the subsequent famines in the various parts of our country, stand solid proof to this characteristic of trade. In the war and the immediate post-war period, trade was so long and so deep in this inhuman habit of coining wealth out of the corpses of the people, that even today this evil exists quite strong, though dormant, only to openly manifest in the meanest circumstance of shortage of any essential commodity. Even in these so-called normal days, trade follows the same pattern and process of exploitation, of cornering stock from the open market in order to deliberately kick up the price, before releasing it to the consumer. This practice of easily amassing wealth has become so normal and natural and appears so honest, that it has already attracted a large section of the monied class into its fold. The worst feature of this entire picture, is the astonishing psychological attitude attached to it, that there can be no question of morality in trade. People seem to have two separate standards of judgment for a person's life as a business man and as a citizen. It has become common to say, business can't be but that. We have degenerated into this wrong and dangerous attitude because of the atmosphere of utter licentiousness, trade enjoys and its popularity as the most easy means of making money.

The immense immorality in trade has been spreading corruption not only in the entire state apparatus, both parliamentary and administrative, but also in the general national life. With the vast power of money at its command, trade can buy its way through the most stringent system of state control. Therefore, introduction of mere legislative and administrative control, without direct economic grip, will only give added opportunities for the growth of corruption in the administration. The nation has experience of this in the past; and even now in the realm of import and export, which is completely in the private sector and on which there are numerous legislative and administrative controls, we see the same result.

Trade is an essential aspect of collective existence. Its purpose is to act as the multi-phased conveyor between the producer and the consumer. It can claim a just share in proportion to its service. But if it goes beyond its natural limits and takes a dominant position over both production and consumption, devouring the lion's share of the national wealth, then it dislodges and ruins the entire economy. Today we are in this unhappy position. Trade has become the ruler of the nation. Modern world can be said to be in the middleman civilisation. By its dominance in the basic aspect of human existence, this phenomenon of the middleman has become so overwhelmingly important, that it has spread to the various aspects of life. It looks as if collective existence is not possible without this phenomenon; even the

great God can be approached only through a middleman. Share and stock exchanges, which should have been the forums where the natural economic laws of supply and demand operate in freedom and decide the price levels, have become the tools of the middleman, who through manipulation and speculation, control and alter the prices to their selfish advantage and to the detriment of the millions of producers and consumers. The machinery of banking, whose purpose should have been pooling the surplus national wealth, to divert it into the nation's productive channels, has been seized by the middleman. A considerable amount of the nation's financial power is got hold of and utilised in his anti-national activities of amassing ill-gotten wealth.

If a nation's economic life has to be planned in order to offer all the people equal opportunities of life, it cannot afford the luxury of licentiousness in trade. It has to be controlled in tune to the basic principles of human life. The unnatural predominance of the middleman has to be eliminated, by bringing back trade to its normal role of genuine conveyor between production and consumption. It must be recognised that it is impossible to totally banish the middleman from the economic picture, however much some idealistic thinkers, in their utmost contempt on the ways of the present trade, dream about total self-sufficiency in small compact areas. What is possible and necessary is to develop as much of self-sufficiency as possible, in certain basic needs of life, so that the role of the middleman

is reduced to the absolute minimum. Neither complete independence nor total interdependence is possible or welcome. With economic decentralisation, the segment of self-sufficiency does increase; and to that extent the middleman is erased from the picture. But, modern life has become complex with diverse needs, that trade becomes an essential part of collective existence. This aspect has to be regulated and controlled, in accordance with the basic principle of national planning.

In modern economy, wholesale trade is the key to the entire trade organism. Therefore, the state should completely take over this aspect and complement it, with the state monopoly on export and import. With these twin steps, state can have effective control over the numerous, multifarious, small retail traders. No state can think of taking over the entire retail trade, as it is not only impracticable, but also unnecessary from the point of view of our objectives. To eliminate the private sector, even in retail trade, means too much of the state and too little of the individual. With its control over production, and monopoly on wholesale and import and export trade and control over the nation's finance, the state can certainly insure a smooth movement in the entire economic machine, controlling the prices of both the raw material and the finished product. The state can also have its own retail stores, either co-operative or departmental, in all the key market centres, as the direct instrument of controlling the open market. If by similar measures,



the people's Government of China could stabilise the markets, control the prices and assure an adequate supply of producer and consumer goods, in a war-ravaged country, collapsing in severe economic crisis, with astronomical inflation, sinking production and serious scarcity of basic goods, within a period of four years, India in the present situation can certainly better do. Only it needs the vision and the will.

As is trade to production, so is transport to trade. Without adequate and fair transport, trade cannot run smooth; and without clean trade, production cannot develop. So, the nation's transport in extent and nature, must be in proportion to and in accordance with the general level of economic life. The cost of transport must be in relation to the general price level. Good, cheap and adequate transport, utilising latest technology, ought to be our aim.

Though we are today much ahead of many backward nations, our transport may, on the whole, be said to be yet unsatisfactory. In these days of super-sonic air transport, with near prospects of atom-powered transport, major bulk of our economy rides on animal transport, the age long bullock cart; and we yet have the inhuman form of human transport. We have to take very rapid strides in the field of transport, if our nation must accelerate its material development. Development of transport is too big and too heavy a problem for any state to solve, without the active participation of the millions of our country men.

So far, rail transport and air transport have been nationalised; but, road transport is yet mostly in private hands. We are dependent on other nations for the railway locomotives and much of the road transport vehicles. A big nation has to be almost self-sufficient in these collective needs. We have to build many more Chittaranjan and Hindustan factories. The present rail mileage is small, in comparison with the area and population of our country. To increase the mileage is a heavy task, needing the active co-operation of the common man. Today the state is laying lines mainly with its financial strength, with the labourer participating as a wage-earner. This has to be replaced by the conscious participation of the people, which is bound to come with the liberation of the peasant. In the present situation, it may not be wise to give too much prominence to air transport, which can wait development on a big scale. The nation should concentrate on the twin development of road and rail transport. All forms of human transport has to be abolished. But animal transport has to be improved, as it is not possible to give it up, for quite a long time. Transport is usually called the arteries of the nation's body. If it is disturbed by the creation of bottlenecks, the nation suffers in the same way as the body whose arteries are blocked. Transport is also essential for the modern man's mental and cultural growth. Fast transport has already reduced the vastness of the world in man's conception and will in future aid the development of human personality, by fostering the unity of man.

Modern state, with its ever widening activity, needs an immensely growing financial power. An economically backward nation will inevitably have weak financial resources. But, if it can commandeer the full financial power at its disposal and utilise it in a scientific way, to inaugurate the process of national reconstruction, a cycle of progression will be set in motion. Therefore what India should do, is to pool its entire financial power and concentrate it on economic reconstruction. Revolutionary means of commandeering financial power have to be boldly devised. Erstwhile methods need not be maintained, just because they have been long-standing. In a fast changing world, routine and habit become obstacles in the path of progress. All existing ways have to be re-evaluated in the light of our national objectives and the obsolete ones given up and new means devised, in tune to the time and purpose.

In any modern centralised state, financial power is also necessarily centralised and so if we have to evolve a decentralised system, we have to begin that process in the financial field, without which all talk of decentralisation will be moonshine. Power to panchayat will remain a hollow statement, unless it gets adequate financial power to be able to discharge its functions. But this cannot be done in a day. It takes considerable time, in proportion to the growth of decentralised economic and political units all over the country.

Centralised or decentralised, the resources are the same. So, what is immediately important is

to clearly map out all the available resources and devise effective ways of seizing them. The one primary source of all wealth is nature; and, man by his labour has to secure it. What he gets is various types of goods necessary for life, which represent the real wealth. But in the complexly woven modern society, money gets the position of wealth. Born as a mere medium of exchange, it has today become the symbol of financial power. The principal means of securing money are taxation and state enterprise. No nation should rely exclusively on the one or the other. If India's aim is a decentralised economic and political system, based on the real freedom of the individual, it will have to work out a balanced proportion between these two sources of revenue. Too much reliance on taxation with little state enterprise, will not provide adequate financial power; and too much of state enterprise, in spite of offering rich revenue, is unwholesome for the growth of the individual.

Taxation will therefore continue as one of the principal means of revenue for our state. Taxation should be in direct proportion to the wealth and income of the individual or the unit. Direct taxation must therefore have preference over indirect taxation, which will inevitably fall on the shoulders of the common man. In our country today, indirect tax is much higher in proportion to the direct. Barring income-tax, which falls on the wealthy class, almost all the other existing taxes somehow or other are thrown on the mass of the people. This inequality and injustice in

taxation has to be obliterated, by imposing many more direct taxes on the propertied classes and by considerably reducing the rate of all types of indirect taxes on food, cloth and such other basic needs of life. In spite of having a progressive rate-scale system of income-tax, with a rate of ninety per-cent above a maximum limit, tax evasion is of a tremendous magnitude. Some economic experts opine, that almost fifty per-cent slips away in evasion. Businessmen have evolved ingenious devices of evasion, taking advantage of the loop-holes in the law and the corruption in the administration. The provision in the law for the factor of untaxable income, if it goes to augment the capital, giving scope for manipulation of accounts, is just one of the loop-holes that is utilised as a mean of tax evasion. It needs a very close study of the entire problem in actual practice, to be able to find out all the devices of evasion. Tax evasion of all forms and types of taxes has so much taken root in our economic life, that it needs a thorough research and brave new thinking, to be able to formulate a sound system of taxation which offers no loop-holes. But, even a sound system cannot prevent evasion without sound administration. Once again we see how all our problems are closely interwoven, that a change in one demands a corresponding change in many others.

Quite recently our state has imposed death duties. It is a progressive form of taxation, but the rate is yet small compared to that of other nations. The British ruler had imposed another

direct tax, in the war period, the Capital Gains Tax, which our national Government, has mistakenly abolished. A British economic expert in taxation, who recently studied our taxation system in relation to our economy and the financial needs of the Second Five Year Plan, has submitted a report in which he is reported to have advocated for the immediate imposition of a tax on capital gains, a tax on expenditure, a tax on gifts and an annual tax on wealth, as necessary complements to income-tax and death duties. He is supposed to have shown how the above direct taxes will help in scotching all possible attempts at tax evasion. He is reported to have further said, that without these direct taxes on wealth, it is not possible to raise enough money for the implementation of the Second Five Year Plan. He feels that the amount of money now proposed to be raised by taxation in the plan period, has to be trebled, if the nation should not fall a victim to terrific inflation. If this enhancement of direct tax is necessary for the successful implementation of one five year plan, one can realise how much more it is necessary from the point of view of the aims and outlook, India should have in order to fulfil its historic destiny in the present age.

State enterprise in industry, transport, trade, banking and insurance is another principal source of revenue. The main task is to run the state enterprises on a scientifically efficient and economically sound basis, without which, it becomes more a liability, than an asset. This needs an army of new cadre, with ability, efficiency and a proper

outlook on life. Thousands of educated young men have to be selected and trained in the right way. Without preparing the proper cadre, any attempt at state enterprise is bound to fail, bringing into disrepute the very principle of collective action. The old cadre, with the old attitudes to life and work, will consciously or unconsciously sabotage the basic purpose of state enterprise. With right men, manning state enterprises in industry, transport and trade, the state can acquire a large amount of financial power. In the field of banking and Insurance, state, not only gets the returns of business, but also control over a large amount of national wealth. State borrowing and national savings of all types are other means of getting operational control over people's money. People's voluntary labour, in any country with a vast population, is an important source of financial power. All this shall become possible, only if the toiling millions of our country are roused into conscious action.

Foreign aid is also an important source of financial power. Our country with its policy of friendship with all nations, has no doubt the opportunity of securing aid from all nations, whatever their political complexion. But it is not wisdom to base our plan of national construction largely on foreign aid. Our principal reliance has to be on the nation's resources. That gives us strength to receive foreign aid, without detriment to our national interests. No foreign aid, whether in the form of grants, loans or investment, which militates against the principles of our national

plan, should be accepted; because, what is necessary in the world today is not mere economic prosperity at the cost of principles, but a system of society based on the life and dignity of the human being.

Deficit finance has become an accepted source of power in modern economy. It is not only necessary in a country with small resources, but, if wisely used, will act as a fillip to the economic development. But, an over dose of this will cut at the roots of the plan, by setting in motion the inflationary spiral, with its consequent evils of speculation and blackmarket. Deficit finance should, therefore, not be out of proportion to the direct revenues of the state or to the volume and intensity of economic activity or to the level of development of production. Though it is very difficult to prophecy the exact repercussions of deficit finance, in a period of change, the danger line can be approximately located, so that it is kept within the limits of safety. With state's growing control over production and trade, the possibility of countering the evil effects of inflation becomes greater. The state will have to commandeer the entire financial power through all these ways; but should guard against any rigidity of approach in a changing economy.

Wise and proper spending is as important as efficient collection of financial power. When every pie has to be carefully utilised in view of the immensity of the task, waste is criminal, as it dampens the enthusiasm of the people. When they see that money is wasted or ill-spent, they get into the



psychological attitude of lethargic non-cooperation. People can be expected to sacrifice for the national cause, only when they see their wealth being wisely utilised. As it is, with the appalling corruption, inefficiency and apathy of the bureaucratic administration and with the power-infested, party-circumscribed state apparatus, national wealth has been wasted in dangerous proportions. There have been many instances of squander, waste and misappropriation of national wealth, in the dealings of the state apparatus, in its purchases, sales and execution works. Those that have been exposed to the public eye, are but typically few of the many that have not come to light. The public works department still continues to be the notorious public waste department, causing immense waste in the giant projects of national importance. In the name of social service, national extension scheme, community projects etc., the nation's financial power is considerably frittered away. High placed officials sitting in Delhi, completely cut away from the life of the common people, conceive fantastic schemes, which being quite out of tune to the actual conditions of life, go futile in purpose. And the plethora of committees and commissions of the Governments, at the centre and the provinces, the numerous Seminars of various types, and the countless number of state sponsored delegations, economic, social, educational, cultural etc., to all the corners of the world, have their rich contribution towards the huge waste of public wealth. All these lines of activity are no doubt necessary, for a nation in

the present age; but, they have grown too much out of proportion to the general situation of our national economy. In all these and in many others, like the too gorgeous receptions to foreign visitors, we are blindly imitating the wealthy nations of the West, without consideration of our economy or our intrinsic national culture.

Luxury is wrong and unhealthy for the real being of any people in any age; for a country, in which millions are yet in hunger and privation, luxury is callous and criminal. Gorgeous parties in the face of ill-clad and poorly fed children, are blasphemy of man and God. Palatial palaces mocking low dishevelled huts, luxurious limousines throwing dust on the poor pavement dwellers, rich and colourful apparel flaunting before the half-naked beggar women, cannot be tolerated by a nation, that aspires to create a sense of equality and justice. Therefore the production and the import of all articles of luxury, that is consuming a good portion of national wealth and the much needed foreign exchange, has to be very much curtailed and even totally eliminated. Mere condemnation of the immorality of wasteful luxury is of no avail, except as a consolation to one's conscience, if the material basis of luxurious living is not totally wiped out.

All the above is avoidable waste, compared to the expenditure on military, which is almost unavoidable in the present situation. A little less than half of the total income of the centre is consumed by the military: and there seems to be no near prospect of reducing it to any

effective degree. On the contrary some situation may arise which may compel enhancement. All nations in the world, big or small, are overburdened with this unnecessary, non-human item of expenditure. Till real peace grows in the very texture of relations between nations, none can hope to get rid of this dead-weight. Today, we are only in the no-war situation, just because of the terrifying fear of total destruction, that prevents nations from acting like beasts. From deterrent fear, it is a long way to go, for nations to become human out of love and understanding. Therefore in this expenditure on the military, which is unproductive and non-life elevating, all preventable waste has to be avoided by proper measures of economy and organisation. But, the one and only way of countering the effects of this unavoidable waste is to plan and utilise the physical and mental resources of the entire military, in the works of national reconstruction, like dams, canals, roads, etc., without detriment to the main purpose of defence. Total reliance for national defence on the regular standing army alone, is an old fashioned idea of the empire days. In the present age, a free country must bring its common people into the picture, through the organisation of the national militia as a complement to the regular army, which through its participation in nation-building work, forges bonds of affection with the people.

In spite of adequate financial power and a salutary system of trade, transport and organisation, industrial revolution, of the nature and

extent demanded by the needs of the time, is not possible without the conscious and active co-operation of the working people. Assurance of the basic material condition and a real prospect of improvement in the near future, through a proper and human system of wages, work and leisure, is unquestionably necessary. But that alone will not rouse the initiative of the worker, without his real participation in the management. A system of effective participation of the working people in the entire management, will kindle the latent spark of dynamism and initiative. Quite recently in our country, through the initiative of the labour ministry, experiments have been conducted in the efficacy of the working men's participation in the management. It was reported that a textile unit, on the point of collapse, could recover and stabilize its position within two years. But, the soundness of the principle needs no experimental proof. It is materially productive and humanly necessary. Mere acceptance of the principle, without creating the necessary opportunities of training and development to the working people, does little good. An awakened worker, collaborating with an awakened peasant, shall gloriously carry forward the great industrial revolution, our national economy needs.

Man's struggle for existence has invented the machine and harnessed the powers of nature. The more he understands nature, the richer his technology and the vaster the machine. Throughout the generations of human life, man has been placing more and more labour and gaining respite

for himself. Without the machine, man's whole life becomes hard and crushing labour, for the bare means of a subsistence. Machine not only releases man from drudgery, but aids in providing him with a good supply of all the material goods of existence, so that the leisure it provides, he can richly utilise. Machines have been gradually taking over the labour function of humans from one aspect to another, that it will not be a surprise, if a day comes, when man has little or no labour left for himself. Even today in the most industrially advanced nations, mechanical gadgets and robots, have effectively replaced man from many spheres of activity, and the electronic brain seems to be a growing challenge to the human brain. What happens, if man is completely replaced by the machine? Humanity will be faced with the menacing problem of all leisure and no work. Man, with no labour, must slowly pine and wither away, as life exists on labour. The machine must therefore have a limit; it should aid man and not replace him. It can take away all drudgery and routine labour, but not that which is necessary to keep man active and living. Because man does not exist for the machine, which has no justification to be, if it harms human life.

Today we are in a topsy-turvy world. It looks as if man exists for the sake of the machine. Men are against war; the nations are not for it; but the machines need it and so nations declare war and men wage it. The machine has grabbed to itself a preponderantly immense importance.

It has entered into all the spheres of human life. It has seized the mind and heart of man, who has so long and so assiduously been worshipping it, that today the machine has entered his very soul. Human mind has become a machine; thinking has become woefully mechanised. The human brain has become so mechanical, that it little differs from its electronic counterpart. This is the harshest tragedy for the human race. Mind, that created the machine, instead of being its master became a slave of its own creation. Propelled by a situation, mind thinks out and creates a system of ideas or of organisation, which answers the challenge of a problem of a particular time. But, the moment it gives birth to a fine and effective system, it becomes so much attached to it, that it allows itself to be bound and circumscribed by its own creation. Conditions change, new situations arise, and fresh problems challenge; but, the limitless mind has limited itself. It is no longer free to soar high and see and search for the solution. Imprisoned and conditioned, it can think only in the way of a particular past. This is the tragic situation of the modern mind. There was no time in the entire history of humanity, in which its mind has been so much enslaved. A mind, that fears adventure always seeks for security, either in its own creation or that of others. It takes shelter under a system of philosophy or an ideology or a religion. Afraid of the free jolts of life, modern mind, lands itself into a rut and a routine, considering itself safe. This conditioned and mechanistic mind is the gift of

the industrial civilisation. Therefore, India should beware and counter this by balancing its industrial revolution, by an equal revolution in its mental being.

## MENTAL BASIS OF LIFE

IF India should fulfil her historic destiny by creating an exemplary human order of equality, freedom and growth, it must complement the provision of the material basis, with a sound mental basis of life, in harmony with the time spirit. Without a proper and adequate mental atmosphere, development in the material aspect brings disharmony in life, by producing an unbalanced sense of values. Material prosperity may arrogate too much of importance in existence, to the detriment of real, moral and human values of life. India, therefore, should be highly cautious of stumbling into the same tragic error, which certain materially advanced nations had fallen in the past. It cannot afford to forget that "where wealth accumulates, men decay". India must therefore give genuine consideration to its problem of education so as to be able to reshape it in tune to the needs of the age.

Education, in its full and real sense, connotes the entire life, including the particular aspect of schooling. It is what one generation offers to the succeeding generation. Life alone is the true educator; but some amount of schooling is necessary, to provide the young with the ability to face life and learn from it. The task of school



education is to prepare the innocent child into a free-thinking, virile and receptive youth, with the necessary knowledge and training, to be able to take a bold plunge into life. He must be able to choose his place and role in collective existence according to his nature and capacity. Education has to provide each individual, not only the general knowledge and training necessary for all in a particular age, but also give them the special training demanded by their basic nature. Education therefore is of two stages, the general, which everyone should get; and the particular, according to the 'Svabhava' of the individual. From another angle, education can be looked at from two aspects, the aspect of the method and the aspect of the content. Therefore education, in method and content, in the general and in the particular, must be closely linked up with life. Divorced from actual life, it becomes unreal and useless; for, it is life that gives a meaning and a purpose to education. So, it can neither be a rigid and unchanging system nor a dead uniform pattern for all, irrespective of the diversity of Svabhava from individual to individual. Regimentation of education is the biggest evil of collective life. However noble the motives and however great the rulers, regimentation and uniformity kill the essential spirit of education. It is not a process of manufacturing identical, standard types of products, out of the innocent human raw material. It should be one that elevates man by inspiring independent thinking and courageous action.

Present-day education is most unsatisfactory in

many countries of the world. In some it is regimented totally and in some partially. Nowhere, education has living-bonds with collective existence. The light of human purpose is not shed on it. It does not derive inspiration from the soul of Man. Even where it was attempted to link up education with life, it has been done only with the material or the physical aspect of existence and not with the moral and spiritual aims of humanity. All the tremendous advance in Science and material technology and the discovery of atomic energy, heralding an unprecedented revolution in material existence, have made almost all the systems of education, hopelessly archaic and futile. The system of education in our country is a tragic anachronism. One that was introduced by the British after their own system, a century ago, is still maintained by the National Government. The very system then obtaining in Britain had long ago ceased to exist; but the carbon copy, that was imposed on us, still goes strong. Conditions have changed, new needs have arisen, and different purposes have come into the picture; but our Government, despite its all-too-serious proclamations of National reconstruction, continues the old, rotten system in toto.

The mass method of education, with one teacher haranguing at the top of his voice to fifty, eighty or even hundred boys, in the same routine, uniform way, from year to year, has become universal in all the stages of education,—Primary, Secondary, and University. All the poor boys are crowded in a narrow room and for one

hour some teacher pours out some information about some subject, to be immediately followed by another, doing the same on a different subject, for five hours in the day. The boy is supposed to get the same information imposed on his mind once again at home, so that something of it is slowly crammed into his head. All present day teaching is a stupidly simplified process, repeated day after day, of cramming all sorts of unconnected information in the poor little skull of the boy. The nature and method of examinations, coming at the end of one year's study, which can test only the memorising capacity of the boy's brain, demand only the cramming type of education. Because, along with the taught, the teacher and the particular school, is also tested at these wonderful annual examinations. If enough has not been pumped into the skull of the boy, he fails and in the long run, in the present competitive atmosphere amidst educational institutions, both the school and the teacher suffer failure. There is now an unseemly race among the educational institutions for higher percentages of success in the so-called public examinations. It means, schools, that should be imparting centres of knowledge are becoming mind cramming factories, devising newer and newer methods of memorising information. Instead of awakening and sharpening the young mind in creative thinking, the present method of education is simply killing it, by compulsorily loading it with confusingly variegated information.

This method of teaching is regular torture to

the little children, to whom life is all play. Children therefore look upon the primary school as if it is a prison house. No child who is normal loves to go to school. He adamantly refuses. He will have to be bribed, or threatened or beaten into the school. It is something like driving the innocent cattle into the pound.

To the child all life is play and he learns by play. But to the ignorant parents, child's play is a big nuisance and a regular hindrance, which they try to get rid off, by driving the poor child into the prison house of the primary school. For some time the child continues to rebel; but he is subdued by force at home and at school. His buoyant spirit gets curbed and he resigns himself to the inevitable. Gradually, by this constant process of schooling for years, by the time the child grows into a youth, he would have lost the real zest in life and the native spirit of adventure. All creative thinking would have been scotched and his brain would have been reduced into a memorising machine.

Primary education, the most important stage that lays the foundation for further education and future life, is today in a miserably pathetic situation. A great majority of schools are not even properly and adequately housed, set up in dilapidated huts or mud houses, in the most uncongenial and unhealthy surroundings. Almost always accommodation being scanty, the little children are huddled like sheep, on the dust-filled dirty floor. Normally, except a rickety chair and a stool and a weather-beaten, black-board, with a

few pieces of chalk, there is absolutely no material for the teaching of children. The primary school teacher has become a symbol of poverty, ill-health and ignorance. With too little salary and too large a family, with no other means of living, he has neither interest nor initiative, in the education of the children entrusted to him. He just does a routine job of bawling out some nonsense over the heads of those poor children, day after day. What else can be expected of him amidst such surroundings and conditions. Teaching little children is the most difficult of all teachings; it is for easier to lecture in a University, than to teach in a primary school. But the type of the present primary school teacher is appalling. The general situation in the secondary education is not better than in the primary stage. The same conditions prevail, may be, just a shade lighter; but here the method of cramming is observed with religious fervour. The secondary school teacher also is not adequately paid, does not get proper training and he too knows little of real teaching. Men at the Universities may have little to complain about salaries; but, there too, they have neither the aptitude nor the interest nor the ability to teach in the true sense. Lack of amenities, and the necessary teaching material, particularly in Science, both in the Secondary and University sections, is really considerable.

The content of education, in all the stages, is as unsatisfactory as the method. The same syllabus formulated a few decades ago, still holds sway. There seems to be no principle, no objective and

no basic outlook, on which the syllabus is planned. The British ruler was in need of an army of quill-drivers and so his educational system was intended to provide literacy and not knowledge. What was expected of the clerk was not independent and creative thinking, but the capacity to do a particular type of routine job, which a machine was unable to do. The syllabus formulated by the Imperialist rulers looks so designedly haphazard and without meaning, that a deliberate motive may well be suspected. It takes five years of primary school for the boy to learn the alphabet of his mother tongue, just to the extent of reading small words, and to learn numbers and minor arithmetic, like addition, subtraction etc. With that he starts the secondary education, which he has to go through for six years, to become literate in his mother tongue and to be able to do Elementary Mathematics. He is supposed to have been taught in addition History, Geography and Elementary Science. Everything is given to him in bits and shreds; he gets nothing full. A little of this, a little of that and a little of so many things was picked out at random and put into his poor head. It looks as if he gets something of everything; but actually he gets nothing of anything. General education is supposed to end with the secondary stage and particular education is supposed to begin with the University. But in reality, University education today is an admixture of both the general and the particular. Languages come into the general and only the Optional Group is particular. A student is supposed to choose the

Optional Group in accordance with his aptitude and inclination. Certain subjects have been earmarked for certain branches of technical studies. But much of what the boy studies at the University, will be quite out of relation to the nature of the technical study, he plans to take up. Likewise, much of what he studies in technical course will not be in proper relation to his profession. Because, from Primary to the University stage, the content of education has not been formulated, in the light of the needs of the collective and the individual life, in changing time. If we realise the way books are prescribed in the various stages, we can have some understanding of the nature of the content of the present day education. For the Primary and Secondary stage, books are prescribed by the Text Book Committees, appointed by the local body or the State Government. In the University stage, the Senate, through a sub-committee, formulates the syllabus and prescribes the text books. In all this we are faced with the ludicrous picture of men, who do not actually teach and are out of direct contact with the taught, deciding what these young men have to be made to study. When book publishing is a private, profit-making enterprise, one can well imagine what sort of forces and factors come into play, in deciding the text books. Corruption, favouritism and black-money, combine and impose some book, whatever its worth, on the helpless minds of the young men of our country.

With the information cramming method of

education, with the most unrealistic and non-purposive content, and with poorly paid, inadequately trained, psychologically unsuited teacher, with the stupid system of annual examinations and with the lack of necessary material requirements, it is no wonder that the primary schools have become the prison houses of children, while the High Schools and Colleges have become factories producing standard goods. Public examinations have become the one big cause of fostering inordinate corruption of both the teacher and the taught. In this atmosphere, the relationship between the teacher and the taught cannot but be one of conflict. There is very little understanding or sympathy or affection between the teacher and the taught. Therefore, it should not be surprising if the students in general are restless and indisciplined, caught in the general frustration of the post-independence period. Wise men are not scared away by the growing indiscipline among the students; they consider it as an infalliable pointer to the uninspiring system of education, which has to be totally overhauled, if the nation has to reconstruct itself on the truths of life.

It is sad and serious that even after eight years of freedom, despite the experiments in Basic education conducted under Gandhiji's inspiration, our Government has yet to begin real and genuine consideration, on the method and the content of education, which our people need at the present age. Even in the much advertised Second Five Year Plan, there is no serious attempt to evaluate



the system in the light of the national objectives. It aims at mere multiplication of the number of existing institutions in all the stages, mere development in quantity with little or no change in quality. What use is it to the nation to merely enlarge the wrong system? Will it not be in the nation's interest not to multiply an evil? This unimaginative multiplication of institutions, under the same old system, will do more harm than good. Various commissions have been appointed, reports prepared and numerous seminars conducted, to discuss the reports of the plan. Nothing good or tangible could come out of all this, because the very basic approach to the problem is wrong. The commissions have not been asked to study whether the present method and content of education is in tune to the basic outlook of the nation. Naturally therefore, the consolidated report in the draft plan speaks only of targets and of percentages of development in the various stages. We too have caught the infection of quantitative targets, in whose glamour we seem to have lost sight of the qualitative content. In the power-mad, party system of parliamentary democracy, we are gifted with ministers of education, who are the least educated and members of the Senate, who are almost illiterate. Education is a very important aspect of the nation's being; a radical change is the urgent need of the day; but we have men at the helm of affairs, both official and non-official, who have no conception of real education, its purpose and its intimate relationship to life.

The purpose of education is to equip man with the knowledge and training necessary to be able to play well, the game of life. Animal species learn by instinct and imitation; their life is simple, mostly based on needs and instincts. Human life is complex. It too has instincts and needs; it also learns by imitation; but, that is only one part of its learning. The larger one is the conscious part. Human being therefore needs conscious training and knowledge. Success and happiness in life, depend on one's knowledge and experience. Therefore, to formulate a right system of education, we should first decide on the nature of knowledge, man should have in the present age. This is the crucial problem of education, whose propriety and soundness depends primarily on the adequateness of its solution. It needs a combined effort, of study, research and genuine free-thinking of real philosopher-educationists in the country, to be able to work out in detail, the entire content of education. What we may here ponder over is just a few basic principles.

All knowledge that a man needs may be classified, for purpose of consideration, as knowledge of *Self*, knowledge of the world and knowledge of a profession. These are not independently separate, but closely inter-connected aspects of one unified process. No one can be complete without the rest and all the three aspects act upon and influence one another. Mere professional knowledge without knowledge of the self reduces man into a mentalised animal. Even the knowledge about the world and Nature does

not make Man full and human, without real self-knowledge, which aids the growth of an integrated and balanced personality, by fostering the real values of life. Without it, proficiency in other aspects is bound to make man self-centered, egoistic and non-human. Caught in the tentacles of the materialistic civilisation, modern education has developed such a craze for professional and technical knowledge, that it pays woefully little attention to self-knowledge and perhaps even derides it in ignorance. Such education can only produce unbalanced personalities, engrossed in false values of life, to whom unbridled material advancement becomes the sole purpose of life. That is the reason why we see in the materially advanced nations, despite their high degree of technical knowledge, so much of confusion and unhappiness. A brilliant graduate, who knows the history of his country or of another or even of the world, knows nothing of the most interesting history of his own human species or of the charmingly instructive story of life on earth. And a master of Engineering, well versed with design, construction and working of several types of the most complicated mechanisms, knows very little of his own wonderful mechanism, its design, its construction and its purpose. Modern humanity has landed itself into this tragic stage. Of what use is the knowledge of the entire Universe, if one does not know his own self.

Therefore, self-knowledge is the first important thing that a system of education should provide. Every man must have an adequate knowledge of

his body, mind and soul. So, the sciences of physiology, psychology, and philosophy or spiritualism, must be part of the general education. It is easy to prepare simple and comprehensive books on physiology and psychology, whose study should lead to the study of 'Gita', which is the unquestionably sound book on the spiritual science of life. 'Gita' has nothing of the religion in the narrow sense. It is a master treatise on the science of the mind and the soul. The secular state can have no reason to be shy in introducing Gita in the educational syllabus, unless secularism is mistaken for materialism. To be secular is to be unattached to any particular organised form of religion and not to be non-spiritual. This knowledge of the body, mind and soul is essential for the growth of a balanced personality. As long as man feels that he is a mere body and mind, he is bound to lead a mentalised, animalistic type of life. Unless he realises that he has a self, which is the master of both body and mind, he will not rediscover the true values of human existence and will not be able to redeem himself from the oppression of the body and the tyranny of the mind.

Self-knowledge or "Atma-Vidya" can be complete with "Brahma-Vidya" or the knowledge of the Supreme spirit in existence. This needs an adequate knowledge of the universe and our little planet and the fundamental laws of nature and existence. Therefore a general acquaintance of astronomy, physics and chemistry, along with a brief history of our planet is necessary. This will have to be complemented with the

most instructive story of life on earth, the planet, the animal and the human species. Self-knowledge and knowledge of the universe are two aspects of one whole entity, which provides the human being with the purpose of life, without which life becomes a meaningless accident.

Science has succeeded in shrinking the vastness of our planet, in human vision. Nations are brought closer together through economic, political, social and cultural bonds. Distances have been conquered; the world family is in prospect. The idea of world citizenship becomes physically possible. In this atmosphere, it is necessary for everyone, whatever his country be, to have a fair knowledge of the geographical, political, economic and cultural nature of all the nations of the world. Each nation has much to learn from the experience of other nations, because human life is one, whatever the clime and colour. In this age, people of various nations have to learn to live together as brothers, if humanity has not to be destroyed in an atomic conflict. It needs mutual affection, born out of sympathetic understanding of one another. Education should impart world knowledge that would not foster misunderstanding; suspicion, narrow nationalism and conflict. It is really an onerous task to write afresh the history of the various peoples of various nations, with this outlook. But it has to be done, if the oneness of the human race has to be achieved. Present history based on the spirit of narrow nationalism, can only divide people. It is stupidly suicidal to continue to give a knowledge, that has

in its womb suspicion and conflict. Some eminent men, have attempted to write the history of the world, with a mind freed from the limitations of nation and race. Such books can form the basis on which the history of the world can be presented in a simple and clear way, without all the unnecessary details of personalities, conflicts and wars. A history of the world, that would unite people of diverse nations and history of life on earth, that will inspire the oneness of the human race, if complemented with the latest discoveries in physical science, the revelations of the atomic world, will undoubtedly lay the mental basis for man's effort to develop the sentiment or the feeling, of being one with the entire humanity. It is natural, that one has to learn a little more of one's own country and people, not because of narrow nationalism, but of practical necessity. Yet herein is the danger. One is apt to unconsciously fall in self-glorification, which becomes looking down on the other people. The life of our nation has therefore to be presented in relation to the life of the world, in proper proportion.

Self-knowledge and world-knowledge together make up the main content of general education. As all this will have to be imparted in the mother tongue, one must first acquire the capacity to read, write, understand and express in one's own language. Along with this he should get a grasp of that much of Elementary Mathematics, necessary for that stage in life. Therefore, learning the alphabet and the numerals and acquiring a fair knowledge in the mother tongue, with Elementary

Mathematics, forms the content for the first stage in education. The second stage will have to comprise the essentials in physics, chemistry, astronomy, physiology, psychology and the story of life on earth, the brief history of the world with general geography, and finally 'Gita', which gives both the art and science of life. This comprises the general education which every person will have a right to be provided with. After this comes the third stage, the professional or technical education. During the course of general education, the boy's aptitude and inclination has to be observed and both the teacher and the parent, will have to aid the boy in thinking out and choosing the profession, that is in tune to his Svabhava. This is very important, because, choosing a profession against one's ingrained nature must end in miserable failure. Only when one's profession is in accordance with one's Svabhava, he becomes devoted to work and will labour with full energy and initiative. A nation, that is planning its life, has to be very careful in the division and allocation of social labour.

Modern nations have very much developed this aspect of professional knowledge. Materially underdeveloped nations will only have to carry out all the development in a shorter period. But even in this, the content of education in the various fields, has not been scientifically planned. There is a considerable portion, that is unnecessary and irrelevant to that particular profession. Something has to be removed, something added and the whole series of technical courses has to be

reorganised with the human outlook on life, so that they take less time to be completed. The general plan of the nature and extent of the various branches of professional knowledge has to be formulated in the light of the needs of collective life. Changes in the collective existence should be reflected by corresponding changes in professional education. For instance, legal education can now be totally abolished, as understanding law does not need a teaching institution ; and as law has to be abolished as a profession, in view of the diminution of private property. Today there are only long-term courses of four or five years, for almost all the important branches of technical education. This alone is not enough for a nation that needs thousands of young men for rapid reconstruction work. We have therefore to introduce short-term courses of one or two years, in all the branches of professional education.

On the basis of these general principles, a detailed syllabus of study will have to be worked out, in all the three stages. This needs a commission, composed of all the eminent educational philosophers and thinkers of the country. With a mind freed from all attachments and conditionings of the past systems of ideas, the commission will have to think positively and creatively on the fundamental principles of education, in the light of the basic human objectives. Basing on those fundamentals, the commission will have to work out in thorough detail the entire syllabus. For purposes of detailed consideration, it may divide itself into sections ; but it should not be forgotten



that three stages are not separate and unconnected from one another, but parts of the same process. This commission should also decide on the method of education. If the present information-cramming method has to be replaced by a method of creative education, present system of annual examinations, private and public, has to be replaced by the assignment method of examination. There can be no imposition, no assertion, and no memorising in the creative method. The teacher should only rouse the boy's free and creative thinking on the many sided objects of creation around him. Everything has to be suggested and not told, as simple acceptance is the end of creative thought. To the boy all life is play and so his learning has to be through play and objects of play. The youth will have to learn in unison with work. The main principle of basic education of learning through labour, is quite sound. But it should not be interpreted as learning through work alone, in an exclusive sense. It should be learning through work, also. It does not mean mere addition of craft and academic education; it has to be education through craft. Then alone the present divorce between theory and practice in education, will be eliminated. Basic education, in the present set up, has a distinct advantage to the rural areas, as it does not take away the educated from the village. This method of education, which has to constantly keep as its one purpose, the rousing of the free-thinking of the mind of the student, needs a proper atmosphere and material circumstance, whose provision may

demand a big increase in expenditure on education. But it has to be done, if the nation should survive. Mind, the noblest instrument bestowed by nature to man, should not be made into a crowded storehouse, a dirty lumber room of information. Its searching light should not be quenched, if humanity has to survive the present crisis; because, only a mind that is free from all limitations, can create a new order, a new set of values, and a new culture.

The most important factor in the entire remodelling of our education, is the teacher. Without changing him, no change in content or method will be fruitful. Teaching is the noblest of professions. Guru, in ancient India, was only next to mother and father. But today, in poverty and ignorance, he is so much sunk, that he is perhaps the least respected in the money-eyed society. One, who is the fountain-source of self-knowledge and world-knowledge, who has a rich experience in creative teaching, whose mind is liberated from all limitations, who not only knows but lives the truth of life, who is so pure and noble in body, mind and soul, that he has immense love for the boys,—he alone is the true teacher, the Guru. We need not despair about the possibility of having such Gurus. The nation is not bankrupt of good and able men. Only, they should realise that teaching is the one most important task of reconstructing a people. Most of the present teachers, are no doubt, ill-suited. If their material conditions are changed and a new training imparted, a considerable section may be able to awaken themselves to become real Gurus.

The state should only aid in the entire work of reorganisation of education. Whatever the form and colour, state control on education is bad in principle. Power is the basis of a state and whichever party gets power over the state, will be tempted to use the educational system, for the propagation of ideas, that protect and maintain its power. The incursion of this extraneous factor of power in education is ruinous to the very foundations of knowledge. Therefore all state control on education must go. The state, as the collective organisation of the people, is duty bound to aid education in everyway possible. But the actual control, direction and management must be in an independent body, a federation of all the educational institutions in the country. None, except those who actually teach, should have control over education. It is only direct experience in teaching that can properly guide the system, making necessary changes in changing times. The present system, in which the actual teacher has little say in the guiding centres, which are controlled by men who have little experience of teaching, must be abolished, if rights and responsibilities, as well as theory and practice, must go together in the educational system. But even in this federation, centralism is dangerous, as it makes the system uniform and rigid and therefore not flexible enough for change. The federation body should be the forum for exchange of experience and for the formulation of the general principles and lines of action. The detailed implementation has to be left to the units.

Education should be based on the unity of the fundamental principles, with the diversity of application.

The medium of education must be the mother tongue, which due to its naturalness is the easiest to learn. It cannot be impossible to impart all knowledge through the mother tongue. While in the interlaced international set up, it is necessary to learn one or two languages other than the mother tongue, for instance Hindi and English it is wrong to make any other language except the mother tongue the medium of instruction. The idea, that language builds the unity of the nation and of the world and that diversity of languages, leads to provincialism and disunity among peoples, is the result of jumbled thinking. Language has very little to do with the unity or disunity of a nation, which depends on different factors, economic, political and cultural. Failure to see the real causes of disunity, has led to this mistaken idea about language. For superficial observation this idea looks quite harmless, but in truth it is dangerous to certain fundamental characteristics of human life. This idea leads to the slogan of uniformity of language, for the nation or even for the world. It is suicidal to hit at the natural roots of a language, for it only ends in losing one's own and failing to get another. Learning of other languages depends on the extent of learning in one's own language. Life and time, therefore demand, first and foremost, rich proficiency in the mother tongue, as the foundation for the entire superstructure of knowledge.

Change in education has to be followed by corresponding change in art and literature, in books, periodicals and papers, in cinema, radio and television, which are some of the important means of education in modern life. If the schooling aspect goes in one direction and all these do not go in a corresponding way, there is a contradiction in atmosphere, which is bound to result in confused and split personalities in the nation. Cinema has become the most important means of mass communication, considerably influencing the outlook and behaviour of the common people. Radio is also growing in importance and very soon television will become a major force. Likewise, papers and periodicals have earned an important place in the life of the people. Books too are gaining ground, with the gradual growth of the reading habit in the nation. Fine arts, like music, drama, dance, painting, sculpture etc. have a deep and sublime influence, though on a small but significant section of the people. But, these forms of art have profound potentialities of education and elevation.

The task of bringing about a change in outlook and execution in all these forms of human expression, in accordance with the purpose of life, is very difficult, but absolutely necessary. It is obvious, that state cannot and should not control or regiment these arts. It is also true, that the evolution of the new outlook in the nation will help and induce them to adopt a similar attitude. But that alone is not enough; the state should take initiative in forming autonomous bodies of all

those various branches, as instruments of cultivating the new outlook. Associations of writers, artists, musicians, dramatists, poets and picture producers, have to be formed and encouraged with financial and other help, to think out and formulate the general principles, that should guide individuals or institutions. Subject to those principles and the national objectives of the period and without contradiction of the human purpose of life, they will have full freedom in their particular field of action. But, any slight infringement of the basic considerations or anything against the new values of life or anything that is non-human or non-moral, will have to be mercilessly suppressed and obliterated, because the least licence in the basic things of life, spells untold ruin. We see today, what a demoralising and degenerating atmosphere is being spread by the licentious cinema trade and the cheap dirty publishing houses, that are immersing the people in filthy sex and crime and inhumanity. In the present set up, good things seem to have little chance of success, while evil ones flourish. Therefore, the state should give all encouragement and aid, to good and useful works of art and literature. A sound system of education and a new outlook in art and literature, with the radical change in the material situation, providing adequate means of life, will lay the foundation for creating a proper mental basis, for the construction of a new nation.

## MORAL BASIS OF LIFE

PROVISION of the basic material means of existence with equitable opportunities of life to all and creation of a salutatory mental atmosphere, are the two basic prerequisites for the growth of the nation's moral being. But howsoever essential they are, they alone cannot build the moral personality of the nation. Morals are an aspect of the individual's inner being, which no amount of outer paraphernalia can automatically create. Morals are the result of the individual's conscious inner effort. Lack of the basic material means of existence, pull down and depress the individual from making any efforts to elevate his soul; but mere adequacy of material means cannot make a man moral. On the contrary, luxurious provision of material wealth demoralises the human being. Likewise, intellect, however sharp, and knowledge however vast, cannot by itself elevate a man's soul; though, ignorance makes the individual effort improbable. High intellect is most likely to breed egoism; while, moral life cannot be without humility. Instances are not wanting in the life of men, who have no dearth of material and intellectual wealth, wallowing in pettiness, ego-centredness and immorality, with very little culture of the soul.

To be is not merely to know, but to live; and morals is a matter of being and not knowing. One must live the truths of life to be truly moral. Culture therefore is of the inward, while civilisation is of the outward of the individual or the collective. The highly civilised may be least cultured; and the highly cultured may be the least civilised. To be cultured is to have the true human values of life; and all values reside in one's inner being. Therefore culture or moral life cannot be created by the dictates of law or the commandments of codes or the injunctions of religious systems. Constitutions do not make people good and preachings do not make them noble. Penal codes have not and cannot eliminate the evils of drink, prostitution etc. Even mere acquisition of self-knowledge is not becoming moral, though it is absolutely necessary for culture; because self-knowledge alone can create the urge and the determination for self-effort. Every individual, in his own way, has to strive to become moral. But self-effort needs an encouraging material and moral atmosphere.

If a nation's moral stature does not grow with the material and mental advance, there will be an imbalance in the personality of the nation, resulting in national pride and arrogance. We see today, nations that are materially advanced, with a high degree of technological science, becoming a real menace to the entire humanity. Material wealth becomes the one value in life, the one criterion by which everything is measured. Men become slaves of material forces, which drive



them irresistibly into mutual fears, suspicions, antagonisms, conflicts and wars. America, the wealthiest nation in the world, is allowing herself to be ruled by men of little culture, who are victims of their own fears and suspicions and who are helpless pawns in the play of material forces. Instead of redeeming her soul by a genuine attitude of friendship with all the people of the world, she is dragging herself and the world into the terrific cauldron of an atomic war. Just as peace and happiness of the individual depend on the harmonious growth of the body, mind and soul; so also, a balanced development of the nation-body, nation-mind, and nation-soul is necessary for collective peace and happiness.

The problem of the world is basically the problem of the individual. Change, that really counts, is change in the individual human being. Objective revolution is but the reflection of the subjective. Without change in the individual being, change in the collective being is not possible and without that the objective situation cannot be changed. Even if some change is brought about in the material situation, without the subjective change, man's selfishness, and narrow-minded egoism will reappear in a different garb, as was evident in the Russian experiment. The ultimate purpose of all change in the material atmosphere, is therefore to create a new man, a new human species. It must rouse the individual to change himself through constant effort, to live what he knows and to practise what he preaches. Self-awareness must lead to self-realisation. To be

aware in every moment of one's life, the truths of existence have to get into one's being and become one with it. Virtue is not something achieved by rigid practice. It is not contained in a formalised discipline, or a petrified scheme or system. Virtue is to man, as fragrance is to the flower. It is natural, not acquired. It blossoms out of the being and is not super-imposed.

The root cause of demoralisation in the life of the individual and the collective, is the unhappy divorce between theory and practice. Talking and doing rarely go together in modern life. Preaching in one way and practising the exactly opposite way is the bane of modern social existence. Poison in the heart and honey on the lips, seems to be the criterion of advanced civilisation. India, in the post-freedom period, particularly in its political and economic spheres, has acquired an enormous growth of this untruth and hypocrisy. The politician has become the symbol of this dual existence. Unless this is eliminated, there is little chance of the growth of the moral being of the nation.

Nature has its own inscrutable design to fulfil her purpose. She has thrown up a sublime revolt in the form of Vinoba, by releasing a tremendous moral force to counter the degeneration of man, in the shape of the great Bhoodan movement. Land is a mere symbol of the moral core of the movement, which is not one of mere collection and distribution of land. It is one of gathering together the hearts of the entire people. Its aim is to take away the idea of ownership from the

minds and hearts of the people. All wealth belongs to God and therefore has to be shared equitably by the entire creation. To own wealth is ungodly and non-human, as ownership is the cause of exploitation of man by man. Humanity has so far learnt to grab on the individual basis; it is time to learn to give on the universal basis. Ideas of equality and oneness of man have no meaning, unless one gives up the idea of ownership in actual life. Bhoodan will have to become a great and unique moral force, because it is a real revolution of humanity. Ownership and possession of property or wealth, of power or position, of intellect or talent, is the root cause of all the problems of disharmony and conflict in the world. All the political, economic and social theories and systems and institutions, all our thoughts and actions, in fact our entire life, is today based on the idea of ownership. Bhoodan therefore, demands a change in our thinking and in our feeling, here and now. It is not a gradual process of evolution. It is a matter of realisation. Either there is a revolution in our minds and hearts or they are tied down to the old; either we give up the idea of ownership or cling to it. There is no mid-position, no process and no stage of progress. A mind which is tethered to the past, to the conceptions of old, cannot seize the new idea. Mind, therefore, has to free itself from all limitations and conditionings of the past. The moment it is free, it is changed.

In a nut-shell, Bhoodan embraces the entire philosophy of Sarvodaya. It has within its womb,

the conception of Gramraj and Ramraj, which ultimately should mean no Raj. It conceives of a non-party, decentralised, democratic system of collective existence. It aims to resuscitate the true human values of life, by eradicating the power of money, which has become the sole value in modern life. Money has to be dethroned from the high position in life, which it has usurped. Money started as a harmless little means of exchange and grew into a gigantic monster, devouring all the true values of life. Bhoodan aims at a society in which all forms of State wither away, amidst the widespread blossoming of self-reliance in the people. It aims at a collective existence, where man does not exploit man, but lives in conscious co-operation with all.

The uniqueness of Bhoodan is the fusion of the moral with the material aspect of life. Without the material content, mere moral preaching will be futile. In the long history of Man, there has been considerable moral preaching; and if that were alone effective, humanity would not have been what it is today. The one little corner of the Universe that a man can change is himself, and Bhoodan asks man to change himself first, before exhorting others to change. The tragedy of the modern world is that every one wants change in everything, except in one's own self. Trying to do good to others, without being good in one's self, is not the way of moral life. Bhoodan therefore means the liberation of the individual self.

No state, however noble the men who manage it, can build the moral being of a nation by itself.

In collective life, there are two primary forces, the force of persuasion and the force of compulsion. One is spiritual, while the other is physical. Present humanity needs both these forces in its onward march. State, as the collective expression of the people's will, represents the force of compulsion; while the great moral movements, like Bhoodan, represent the force of persuasion. A child in order to grow, needs both the forces of compulsion and of love from the parents. But once the child becomes mature, the force of fear or compulsion has to disappear in the force of love. Present humanity, despite all the immense development in the material sphere, is still a child in consciousness. Therefore, it cannot yet afford to give up the state. But, a nation must have a proper balance and interplay of the two forces, in accordance with the spirit of the time. Undue emphasis on one, at the neglect of the other, will result in undesirable complications in the collective life. Complete reliance on the physical force will dehumanise man; while giving it up altogether, in the present nature of men and things, will result in disorder and chaos. But in proportion to the growth of the human race, the need of physical force must lessen and dwindle, until finally it becomes unnecessary and so withers and drops by itself.

India must reach that glorious day, when the state will cease to exist, when there is no extraneous compulsion on man, either of law or of code or of systematised religion. Fear will wither away from the life of the individual and

the collective, yielding place to love. All extraneous discipline will melt away in the rising splendour of self-realisation. Present collective existence based on selfish greed, inequality, exploitation, suspicion and conflict, will disappear in the dawn of equality, harmony and love. Man, who is today very much of the animal and the machine, will become fully human,—a self-conscious, self-motivated, self-disciplined personality, who sees his own self, not only in every human being, but in all things of creation. India's supreme offering to the world will be this new man, the real human being, who is pure and virile in body, mind and soul, whose personality is well integrated and whose inmost being is drenched in Divinity. That will be the new human species, imagined by great visionaries of the East and the West.

Modern humanity is an unhappy victim of its own creations. It has invented the atom and hydrogen bombs and is shivering in constant and terrific dread of them. It has constructed systems of exploitation to which it has become a meek slave. In spite of its marvellous advance in science, it is yet mercilessly driven towards an immense catastrophe, by the very material forces it has itself unleashed. Humanity has come to this sad but dangerous position, egged on by the force of circumstance. All through its long history, humanity has been plodding on mostly by unconscious or semi-conscious effort. Even today it is not the conscious, confident master of material circumstance. 'The proud master of atomic energy has

become the puerile slave of his own self'. Men and nations are caught in their past thinking. The individual and the collective mind has become mechanised, rigid and routine bound. Conditioned and circumscribed by their past, nations revolve in a vicious circle of mutual distrust and fear. To them it is as clear as daylight that an atomic war means total destruction of humanity and they have a terrific dread at the very prospect; but yet, they are feverishly preparing for the catastrophe. Immense resources of nature and enormous labour power of mankind is wasted on piling up of armaments. The world today is in a state of precarious peace; it is not real; it is something like armistice. This false state of peace may any day burst asunder. No war is cold war and not peace. Real peace can be born only out of understanding and love. People and nations must realise that they are diverse members of the one human family. But, how can there be love and understanding between nations as long as they do not give up the idea of ownership, which is the root cause of all conflict. As long as man cherishes ownership, he shall not feel himself one with every other human being. And as long as he does not understand his real self, he will cling on to possession. What is true of the individual is also true of the nation. When there is no peace within the individual human being, there can be no peace in the family, in the nation and even in the world. Wars and conflicts between nations are but the magnified reflection of what is happening in the individual self. When the inner being of man is tormented by

disharmony, by conflicting forces, becoming a play-thing of the hurricane winds of emotions and impulses, how can there be peace in the world of men? The wide world outside is only a picture of the small world inside. Therefore humanity cannot have genuine and lasting peace, until the human being realises the oneness of man and gives up all ideas of ownership and possession.

Nature seems to have placed this task on the shoulders of India, by pushing her into the gaze of the anxious, tormented world, frantically seeking out for the true path of peace. Nature has offered India the most valuable experience of other nations, of various experiments in collective existence. She has given India the moral and spiritual courage to stand aside the two antagonistic war blocs, stopping the degenerating process of dividing the world into two war camps. She has made the proud and powerful nations bend down and look to India for the light of peace. Nature has disclosed the secret of atomic energy, in order to give a rude shock to the canalised mind of the human race, and compels it to see that there is no place for violence in human life. Through the American nation, she has shown to the world that mere material wealth, however huge, will alone not bring happiness to man; while through the Russian experiment, she teaches that man is not a mere economic animal or a soul-less machine, but a living, loving, spirit, and therefore the justification of the collective is the fullness of the life of the individual being, in body, mind and spirit. She has revealed the



immense possibilities of development of science and technology and the material and mental wealth, with the sober and sublime conclusion, that if it is not matched with an equal development of the moral and spiritual wealth, there can be no happiness and harmony in life. In the decadence of the great ancient East, nature has declared that true spiritualism does not imply the neglect of the material aspect of life, and that purity of soul needs the virility of body and health of mind. Having created all this atmosphere for a real revolution in human mind and life, nature to-day backons India to march ahead in creating a new man and a new culture, that shall stand the challenge of the atomic age by uniting the entire humanity.

Can India fulfil this historic destiny, nature has offered? Can India seize this great chance of changing herself? India really can. She has the spiritual wisdom of the Vedic age to inspire her. She has the variegated experience of sister people. If she can create a fusion of the material and mental wealth of the atomic West and the spiritual wealth of the Vedic East, out of that shall flower a new culture, a new society, and a new sense of values of life. India has to shake up her national mind from the ruts of conditioning and think free and fresh. In the light of the human purpose of existence, she will have to formulate the fundamental principles of her plan to march ahead. She will have to grasp the basic truths of nature and act in unison with them. She will have to give up smug self-satisfaction at the usually recognised measures of progress; and have

the confident courage to tread bold new paths. She should guard against the temptations of easy imitation and of the false sense of security of mind; while, on the other hand she should not fall in bigotry and ego-centredness. She will have to pool the full resources, physical, mental, moral and spiritual and recreate the life of the individual and the collective. She will have to totally overhaul her state apparatus, by the decentralisation of power and by the introduction of non-party democracy. It has to rejuvenate its five lakh villages by implementing the two basic measures, land to the village and power to the panchayat. It is in these innumerable little villages, that the real spirit of India is yet alive, that the power of money has not completely routed the human values from life; so it is here, in these little patches of humanity, that the moral and spiritual regeneration of India will take birth and envelop the huge cities, that have their souls submerged under heaps of debris of civilisation. New India, cannot have these too small villages on one side and these too huge cities on the other. While the former are too tiny for the possibility of making adequate provision of the necessary material and mental means of life, the latter are too complicated and too mechanised for the release of the soul from material bondage. India, therefore, will have to make her cities small and its villages big. That will be possible with the decentralisation of political and economic power. And then India will have to carry forward her industrial revolution at a rapid speed, but in an entirely different way,

with a different purpose. India will also have to scrap the present system of education and replace it with one in tune to the spirit of the time. Out of this, then, shall arise the moral being of India, with the human culture of oneness of man. Atma-Gnana is the reply India shall give to the atomic menace. Without self-realisation, men cannot become masters of their creation. The great sages of the Vedic age sang of the oneness of humanity, of the oneness of the entire creation. This great universal truth of existence, is today rediscovered by science. Atomic physics has declared that the basic essence of everything, plant, animal and human, animate and inanimate, is inscrutable waves and wave-motions, infinitesimally minute. Vedanta long ago said that the ultimate essence of all creation is Brahman or Spirit; that Jeevatma is but the manifestation of the Paramatma, which resides in everything, living or non-living. This one great truth of existence, which the sages of the East discovered through subjective research and the scientists of the West have rediscovered through objective analysis, shall be the basis of the world culture, that will unite the hearts of nations, by the elimination of the idea of ownership. It is this great truth that gives life and meaning to the need of morals in the individual and the collective life of man. It is this great truth that shall enable man to become really human and create a life of joyous labour, self-dignity and peace. It is on this great truth that India will have to fulfil its historic destiny in the atomic age.

Will India fulfil its destiny? It can, if its noble sons stand true to the great Vedic herit̄age. Let us therefore pray, for prayer is self-determination, in the words of one of the greatest sons of India, Poet Rabindranath Tagore :

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held  
high ;*

*Where knowledge is free ;*

*Where the world has not been broken up into  
fragments by narrow domestic walls ;*

*Where words come out from the depth of truth ;*

*Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards  
perfection ;*

*Where the clear 'stream of reason has not lost its  
way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;*

*Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-  
widening thought and action—*

*Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my  
country awake.*



